LETTERS ON MYTHOLOGY,

(ORIGINALLY ADDRESSED TO A LADY,)

IN WHICH

THE HISTORIES, CHARACTERS AND ATTRIBUTES

OF

THE PRINCIPAL DIVINITIES

AND

MYTHOLOGICAL PERSONAGES

OF

GREECE, ROME, EGYPT, &c.

ARE CONCISELY DELINEATED;

WITH

SKETCHES OF THE MOST REMARKABLE CUSTOMS OF ANCIENT NATIONS,

DESCRIPTIONS OF CELEBRATED TEMPLES,

&c. &c. &c.

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR; AND SOLD BY G. ROBINSON, 25, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1807.

Printed by T. Davison, Whitefriars.

PREFACE.

When a juvenile writer approaches for the first time the awful tribunal of the public, his feelings cannot be supposed to be extremely enviable.—The ardour of composition forsakes him.—The illusions of hope and the flatteries of fancy die away, and he becomes subject to all the anxiety and apprehensions attendant on the publication of a first performance.—From such apprehensions the author of the following pages is far from being free.—He sees but too many defects in them, and doubts not that the eye of the Critic will discover many more.—For these blemishes (as indeed for all the errors into which poor human nature so often falls) truth is the most honourable, and often the most effectual apology.—He therefore begs permission to lay before the reader the real cause of his having commenced mythologist.

It is now nearly six years since a lady, nearly related to the author, requested him to assist her in acquiring a general knowledge of mythology.—Anxious to save her the labour of consulting the tedious articles of a Dictionary, or turning over the immoral pages of the ancient classics, he composed the following letters.—Written in extreme haste, his pages were clouded with the usual faults of hasty and familiar compositions,—but at the same time, if inelegant, they were at least untainted with the dryness which disgusts a youthful reader, or the immodesty which shocks a virtuous mind.—Such as they are, the lady to whom they were addressed conceived perhaps too favourable an opinion of them, and pressed for their publication.—With the solicitations of those whom we esteem it is impossible not to comply.—The Rubicon is passed—and the author submits his work to the lenient judgement of a candid public.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE classical reader will immediately perceive that many mythological fables have been omitted, which are nevertheless extremely famous, such as the History of MEDEA, the God of Gardens, &c. My reason for not noticing these is, that I did not wish to present unto the eye of youth (for whose perusal these letters are principally intended) such odious, dreadful, and disgusting pictures as are to be found in most of the articles I have passed over in silence. The obscurities, contradictions,

and absurdities which abound in some others, determined me to exclude them also from my pages.

Not meaning this work to be a mere recapitulation of the fables of Ovid, I have avoided dwelling upon many of the amours I describe;—intrigues from which little information or amusement is to be gained, whilst they can scarcely be considered as proper subjects for the eye of female delicacy. I have also declined entering into a tedious list of the various names by which the principal Gods were designated, an enumeration of which could only serve to tire and disgust the reader. All these things will be learned by consulting the authors who have entered deeply into the subject;—authors which this work is not meant to supersede, but to epitomize and explain. In short, the intention of these letters, is to give the reader

such a knowledge of Mythology, as may enable him to understand the allusions which are so frequently to be met with in the works of our poets and the compositions of our orators, and to put it in his power to comprehend and enjoy their beauties. To those who wish to descend farther into the minutiæ of fable, the volumes of Virgil, Hesiod, Ovid, Herodotus, &c. are open, where they will find ample food for their curiosity.

These pages, it is hoped, will convey to the mind of the readers (particularly the female part of them) a general, comprehensive, yet concise view of the mythological fables of the ancients, divested of the disagreeable dryness of a dictionary.

It may be necessary to observe, that wherever there exists a diversity of sentiment among writers of eminence respecting any of the characters mentioned in

this work, I have followed the most generally received opinions, which are usually the best calculated to adorn poetical composition, and of the greatest utility in point of literary information and allusion.

LETTERS

ON

MYTHOLOGY.

LETTER I.

IT is with the greatest pleasure, my fair friend, that I sit down to the agreeable task of communicating to you the most essential part of that knowledge, which it requires a long and tedious course of reading to acquire. And I flatter myself that the employment will be of some use to each of us: to my *****, by saving her the trouble of perusing the rubbish of science, while nothing important is omitted; to myself, by recalling to my mind that information which the hurry of business has for many years prevented me from increasing or renewing.

In this "*Manuscript Encyclopedia**," if I may be permitted to call it so, I shall particularly notice only those sciences which are necessary or useful to a female, and shall commence my observations with an account of

MYTHOLOGY,

to which such frequent allusions are made by every author, that it renders some degree of acquaintance with it indispensably necessary to all persons of liberal education.

The word "*Mythology*" is derived from the Greek, and signifies a "Discourse upon Fables;" or more elegantly, "Fabulous History." It is usually applied to the history of the Roman and Grecian Gods in particular, but is equally applicable to that of the imaginary deities of any other nation.—As the Romans, however, added the divinities of all other countries to their own, an acquaintance with

* It may be necessary to observe, that these letters were intended but as a commencement of a correspondence, in the course of which the author meant to have introduced a variety of other studies, as Geography, History, Biography, &c. &c.

their mythology will be sufficient for most purposes of conversation or reading.

The principal divinities of the Romans were, JUPITER, NEPTUNE, PLUTO, MARS, APOLLO, MERCURY, and VULCAN, JUNO, VESTA, CERES, MINERVA, DIANA, and VENUS. After these came SATURN, CUPID, BACCHUS, PLUTUS, HERCULES, THE DESTINIES, THE MUSES, BELLONA, CASTOR and POLLUX, &c. &c. &c.

SATURN,

from whom the last planet in our old system of astronomy is named, was the oldest of the Gods, and was the offspring of CŒLUS and TERRA, that is, of the Heavens and the Earth. By SATURN, I believe, is generally meant time. He is seldom mentioned by ancient writers, except as the father of JUPITER.

SATURN is said to have devoured his children; which I presume has an allegorical meaning, viz. that the present time swallows up the memory of the past, and is itself thrown into oblivion by the future. Thus the actions of our forefathers are unknown to *us*, and *we* shall ourselves be in like

manner forgotten. Ah! my friend, how much then it behoves us to act so, that our virtues and our talents may snatch us from the gulph of forgetfulness, that our children may be able to say something more of us than merely that we *had* lived, but were no more.

But to return to our subject. The history of SATURN, and most of the more ancient Gods, is somewhat confused and unsatisfactory, and appears to be a mixture of tradition and allegory. Our best writers seem to be decidedly of opinion, that these divinities were really sovereigns or chieftains, who had been elevated to the skies by the admiration of their subjects; and it appears probable that the confusion and contradiction which we find in their histories arises from the poets having added allegorical ideas and fabulous events to the ancient traditions, and by these means confounded together the real acts of the mortal with the mythological traits of the imaginary deity.

With respect to SATURN in particular, the practice of devouring his children is imagined to have originated from the cruel

conditions on which his brother TITAN is said to have ceded the throne to him, viz. that he should not bring up any male offspring. They further add, that TITAN, discovering the concealment of JUPITER, NEPTUNE, &c.* made war upon SATURN, and took him prisoner; but was afterwards defeated in his turn by his nephew JUPITER, who restored his father to the throne.

They likewise pretend that Italy derived its name from *Latium*, (*lateo, to lie hid*) from its being the place of his concealment when dethroned by JUPITER. According to their account, JANUS was the king of Italy, and gave SATURN a most hospitable reception, sharing his power with him; and here, through the attention of SATURN to promote the happiness of the people, his reign became distinguished by the name of "the golden age."

* Vesta or Rhea, Saturn's wife, pretended that a stone or beast was the infant she had produced, and Saturn swallowed it immediately; by which artifice he ssaved several children.—A facetious author observes, that her husband's digestion must have been infinitely better than his eyes.

The statues of this deity generally represented him under the figure of a very old man, holding in one hand a child which he seems determined to devour, in the other a scythe (the symbol of mortality), with a serpent biting its own tail, which thus forming a circle*, is well known to be the emblem of eternity.

SATURN, by some means or other, became to be considered as the patron of liberty; for all manumitted slaves offered up their badges of slavery to him, upon the obtaining of their freedom. The *Saturnalia*, or festivals of SATURN, are well known, and it will be remembered that during the continuance of them the slaves were allowed the most unrestrained freedom of speech. From whence this singular circumstance arose, I cannot possibly divine. Some have been pleased to account for it, by an allusion to his confinement while under the power of his brother TITAN; but it seems to me, that the gentleman's

* Nothing can be a more simple, sublime, or appropriate symbol of eternal duration than the circle, because it is a line "which has neither beginning nor end!"

having been a prisoner is rather a curious reason for making him the patron of liberty: It is something like Dr. Moore's story of *St. Nepomuc*, whom the worthy Germans made the tutelary saint of bridges, because his life had been terminated by tumbling him headlong from one.

His imperial son and heir, the mighty

JUPITER,

was concealed by his mother OPS, and afterwards dethroned his father; and having thus become sole monarch of both heaven and earth, is usually styled "the father of gods and men*." Upon his accession to the crown, he assigned to his brother NEPTUNE the dominion of the sea, and to PLUTO that of the infernal regions. Having thus settled matters entirely to his own satisfaction, he amused himself very agreeably with a number of handsome young damsels, whose favours he obtained in a variety of ways, the ingenuity of which shew that this illustrious libertine was not deficient in

* His name indeed is derived from two Celtic words, which signify "*the good father*."

genius. Every shape was assumed with facility to ensure success. At one time we see his thunders laid aside, and himself flying for shelter from his own eagle into the arms of LEDA, under the figure of a trembling swan. At another time the ardent lover is concealed under the habit of DIANA, to obtain CALLISTHO; while at a third the unfortunate EUROPA is carried off by him in the shape of a bull. We see him come nearer to his real character, when he assumes that of a satyr to possess his ANTIOPE; but his neatest scheme (in which he has been often imitated) was that of converting himself into a shower of gold, when in love with the celebrated DANÆ. This was a manœuvre which it is scarcely possible to fail in, and its extraordinary success is doubtless the reason why it has so frequently been practised by our modern lovers.

Don JUPITER did not always, however, reign in this easy and luxurious security.—Among other attempts to drive him from the skies, the most celebrated is the war of the giants, who became so terrible to the gods, that they fled from heaven to conceal themselves in Egypt, where they assumed a

variety of forms, to disguise them from the fury of their enemies. The rebels were, however, at length completely subdued, though not without some difficulty, most of them being of an enormous size and proportionate strength. One in particular had a very pretty mode of attack :—this was no other than discharging from his hundred hands at once as many mountains, with which he pelted poor JUPITER—a mighty agreeable shower, to be sure!

This gentleman, whose name was BRIAREUS, had before assisted the father of the Gods in quelling a conspiracy formed against him by NEPTUNE, JUNO, APOLLO, &c.; but as he joined his brother giants in their insurrection, his former services were forgotten, and he was laid under Mount Etna, (which one would have imagined of weight sufficient to keep him down). The gentleman, it seems, found his load somewhat oppressive, for he was often obliged to turn himself, to obtain a respite from its pressure; and the ancients believed that this motion was the cause of the earthquakes so frequent in the neighbourhood of that volcano.

We shall not be surprised at Mr. Briareus finding himself ill at ease under the weight of this celebrated mountain, when we consider that its height is so great, that it is eternally covered with snow, notwithstanding the flames which often burst from it. Some authors have estimated its circumference at sixty miles, and maintain that it is eight miles high. This last measure, though, it must be confessed, is certainly at least treble that which more modern and accurate observers assign to it*.

Its sides are peculiarly fertile, and the flourishing state of the immense vineyards which cover them is attributed to the ground being formed of old lava (the substance thrown out in a liquid red-hot state, during an eruption), which, according to all accounts, forms a most admirable soil, when a series of years has reduced it to dust. Fine vineyards are certainly agreeable sights; but however I might admire the juice of the grape, I think I should have some difficulty in persuading myself to cultivate that delicious fruit in such a neighbourhood. The human mind, however, accommo-

* Its real height is supposed to be about 11,000 feet.

dates itself to every situation; and I doubt not the peasants who reside on Etna and Vesuvius think no more of the chance of being overwhelmed by a torrent of burning lava, than the shepherd who follows his sheep on Salisbury plain; and that they sleep with as much security within two or three miles of the crater of a volcano as a turtle-fed alderman does on his bed of down after a Lord Mayor's feast.

Here I am digressing again, you see. To resume our subject then—Master JUPITER, having settled the affair of the giants, returned to his old amusements with fresh ardour. Not satisfied with his DANÆS, LEDAS, and ANTIOPES, he married at least a dozen wives—(a proof either of courage or madness, you will say.) For one of these he expressed his affection in rather a singular manner, viz. by eating her up! This was poor METIS, one of the *Oceanides*, or nymphs of the sea, who was so remarkably sagacious, that the mythologists suppose he was afraid she might bring forth a child more able than himself, and that his crown would be endangered by the ambition of his offspring. To prevent this,

he took his poor wife, then pregnant, in his arms, and, being somewhat sharp set, gobbled her up, bones and all. This meal, however, did not sit well on his divine stomach. He became abominably sick, and got a most furious head-ach, which became worse every day; till at length, having endured horrible pain for some months, he applied to VULCAN to ease him. The physician could not think of any other mode of giving him relief than the blacksmith's remedy, of splitting his noddle open—(somewhat a rough cure for a head ach, it must be confessed.) JUPITER did not much relish the proposition at first; but at length, finding his torture unbearable, he submitted with a few wry faces.—Surgeon VULCAN went to work, and the pericranium being opened, the cause of all this mischief appeared in the person of mademoiselle MINERVA, who started forth from her papa's brain, armed *cap-a-pie*. This terminated their amazement. They no longe wondered at poor JUPITER's being so bothered, when they discovered he had such a gypsey in his head; and in fact many an unlucky fellow has found since, that a

handsome girl is a very painful and troublesome inhabitant either of a man's head or his heart!

This uncommon delivery being over, and the gentleman recovered of his lying-in, he went on as usual, and vowing never to dine upon wives again, he married THEMIS, MNEMOSYNE, &c. By these fair-ones he had a multitude of sons, many of whom were afterwards elevated to the rank of deities, as BACCHUS, HERCULES, &c. But of all his wives, the one who gave him most trouble was his sister JUNO, who was so suspicious of her illustrious partner's fidelity, that a jealous termigant is generally compared to her.

JUPITER's insignia are, the eagle, bearing thunder and lightning in his talons; that of JUNO, the peacock—from a fable, that having employed ARGUS, with his hundred eyes, to watch her husband, MERCURY, the god of thieves and of eloquence, contrived to kill him asleep. He was killed, and JUNO transferred his numerous eyes to the tail of the peacock, whence it is styled "*the Bird of Juno,*" as the eagle is termed "*the Bird of Jove.*"

The gallantries of JUPITER, and the jealousy of JUNO *(for the antients universally gave their own passions to their gods)*, are introduced in almost all the works of the Greek and Latin poets, and produced the greatest part of the mythological fables with which the world abounds. They do not, however, fall within the limits of my plan; I shall therefore give you a brief idea of the history and character of

JUNO,

who seems to have been worshipped with still more solemnity than her husband, which may have arisen from the ancients being of the same opinion with our old British ancestors, that "the grey mare was the better horse." She was particularly adored by the Roman matrons, who affected to dress themselves according to the mode in which her statues were clothed. No woman whose character was not perfectly unsullied was permitted to enter her temple; and she was universally considered as the patroness of the chaste, but severe and implacable enemy of the licentious female.

This formidable Goddess was not remarkable for mildness or humanity. Her

cruelties to SEMELE, INO, ALCMENA, and other unfortunate favourites of her husband, are universally known; and the unlucky Trojans traced all their disasters to her resentment, at the decision of PARIS. Thus much for her character. As to her history, it is somewhat long, and well marks the violence of her disposition.

Irritated at JUPITER's frequent intrigues, JUNO determined to separate herself from him for ever, and retired, full of this determination, to EUBOA.

Her husband (who, notwithstanding his naughty tricks, seems to have had really a sincere affection for her) applied to CITHÆRON to assist him in bringing about a reconciliation. CITHÆRON advised him to dress a statue in female apparel, and carry it about in a chariot, giving out at the same time that it was a nymph whom he intended to marry. JUNO soon heard this alarming report, and coming in haste to meet her rival, discovered the artifice, and was easily reconciled.

This calm, however, did not continue long. JUPITER soon became a naughty boy again; and the lady, enraged beyond measure at her injuries, began to form

cabals, with the other deities, and treated HERCULES, one of her spouse's illegitimate babes, with great cruelty. The gentleman, whose expedients seem to have been generally rather singular, put a stop to these proceedings, by suspending lady wife to a golden chain, which he let down from heaven, and thus left the poor Goddess kicking her heels in a very awkward situation, between the terrestrial and celestial dominions. VULCAN assisted his mamma in this predicament, and got a terrible kick from Don JUPITER, which sent him headlong from the skies, and broke his shins by the fall, (for it is no joke to come head over heels from heaven to earth without stopping). JUNO, more furious than ever at this insult, contrived to bring over APOLLO and NEPTUNE to her side; so that her lord and master would have stood a chance of taking a swing in his turn, had not THETIS brought BRIAREUS to his assistance. This gentleman stared so furiously at the conspirators, from his hundred eyes, that they were awed into submission; and JUPITER, enraged at their rebellion, banished NEPTUNE and APOLLO from heaven, to which, however, they were shortly after restored.

The ancients had some curious tales respecting JUNO, by one of which they endeavoured to account for that peculiar white light which is to be perceived in a part of the heavens*.

This appearance, they say, was occasioned in the following manner. JUPITER, who was very partial to little HERCULES, while yet in his swaddling-clothes, put him to JUNO's breast one day as she slept, at which the little fellow pulled away very heartily; and some of the milk falling on that part of the skies above-mentioned, occasioned the phenomenon we have described.

From this singular fable, that quarter of the heavens still bears the name of "*the milky way.*"

This good lady had some children whom JUPITER owned, and one which he did not, viz. VULCAN. However, this difficulty was soon got over. The Goddess declared that it was from smelling some particular flower which she had met with. This, it is true, was somewhat a lame account (at least an

* Since discovered, by the high magnifying powers of modern telescopes, to be occasioned by an immense assemblage of very distant stars.

extraordinary one); but, however, the divinities were satisfied, therefore we cannot pretend to contest the point, and in fact we must not be too particular in these matters.

But I think we have devoted sufficient time to lady JUNO, we will therefore drop the subject for to-night; and as I think I have imposed a pretty severe penance on the patience of my sweet pupil, I shall for the present lay down the pen.

LETTER II.

IMMEDIATELY after the monarchs of the heavens ranked

NEPTUNE,

the God of the sea, so well known as the patron of British sailors, who seem to have cultivated his friendship with more success than any adventurers who have ever ploughed his waves.

He appears to have been a tolerably quiet God, and is little talked of by the Romans, who paid far more attention to MARS. His history, in fact, contains very little to interest you, except his contest with MINERVA, respecting the patronage of Athens.—It was determined that the deity who produced the most useful gift to mankind should have the preference.—

NEPTUNE struck the earth with his tri-

dent, and a horse arose from the ground, from which all our stylish nags are supposed to have descended; but PALLAS gained the victory, by creating the olive tree, which the Gods esteemed the most valuable present, as bearing a peaceful and beneficial fruit, while the horse was considered as an emblem of war and devastation. This decision, I must confess, appears to me rather a doubtful one, and probably the beauty and sex of the victorious competitor might help not a little to turn the scale; for I must freely declare that I think NEPTUNE'S production the most valuable, the horse being not only useful in war, but highly serviceable in peace.

He had another contest with MARS, about his son HALLIRHOTIUS, who had offered violence to ALCIPPE, the daughter of the God of battles. The papa settled the matter like a warrior, by knocking the young gentleman o' the head. NEPTUNE cited him to the tribunal of Justice, (Appendix A): but the conduct of MARS was deemed perfectly correct, after the insult offered to his child, and, according to the modern phrase, the "prisoner was honourably acquitted."—

This celebrated trial took place near the city of Athens, at a village afterwards called "*Areopagus*," the village or hill of MARS, in commemoration of the singularity of the event.

Master NEPTUNE is represented as a strapping lad, for Homer introduces him passing over the world in two or three strides. Pretty decent ones they must have been, you'll say!—He sometimes amused himself with taking an airing upon the ocean, driving about in a stylish chariot, made of a huge sea-shell, drawn by marine horses, and surrounded by a grand court of Tritons, Nereids, Fishes, &c. This, and raising a tempest now and then, just to keep him from *ennui*, seems to have been his principal employment. It is true that he occasionally enlivened the scene a little by trying his hand at an earthquake, and the ancients having assigned him this business is a convincing proof that they were well acquainted with the operations of nature; for modern philosophers have discovered that the sea is actually the cause of both earthquakes and volcanoes, by setting in agitation the ferruginous and sulphureous

particles, with which the bowels of the earth are filled.

But to return. NEPTUNE married AMPHITRITE, notwithstanding her determination to live in a state of celibacy, and is supposed to have been greatly assisted in conquering her cruel resolution, by the genius of the dolphin—a fish to whom he was particularly partial, and whose services he rewarded by placing him among the stars, where he forms the constellation called Pisces, or the Fish. Like other spouses, however, he did not confine himself to his conquest; and AMPHITRITE had not better reason to be satisfied with her illustrious partner than the other matrons of the skies. His gallantries were of course principally confined to the nymphs who presided over rivers, (for the Romans had gods and goddesses for every thing). The distinguishing mark of this divinity is the Trident, or sceptre with three teeth, something like a toasting fork, if we may be permitted to degrade his dignity by such a comparison.

Many heroes, and even whole nations, claimed the title of the sons of NEPTUNE;

but this was merely allegorical, to signify that they were navigators, just as we call our sailors sons of the ocean. In consequence of this custom, it was very common for the inhabitants of any country bordering on the sea coast, who happened to be attacked by foreigners, to call their invaders "*Sons of Neptune*," "*Seaborn*," &c. and it has frequently happened that very able antiquarians and critics have been led astray by this circumstance; for as different nations might at various times make descents on the coasts of a maritime country, to all of whom the same name (as *Pelagians*, for example), expressive of their coming by water, would be applied, modern authors have supposed these different invaders to have been one and the same people; whereas, in fact, the name has not been the proper appellation of any nation whatever, but merely expressive of an accidental circumstance.

MARS

next demands our attention, and indeed, from the importance attached by mankind to the noble and sublime art of cutting our

fellow-creatures throats, he has great reason to complain of my neglect. He was the God of war and battles, and might be justly stiled the tutelary deity of those illustrious butchers, the Romans*.

He took a very active part in the Trojan war, in behalf of the favourites of VENUS, whose gallant he is supposed to have been; though this terrible deity is not represented under a figure very likely to prepossess a lady, being that of an old man with a long beard, a helmet, shield, and spear. His amours with the Goddess of beauty, however, are only allegories, to show that intrepidity is one of the qualities most captivating to the fair sex; and it was perhaps with an eye to the favour in which the red-coats of the day were with the Roman belles, that the Latin authors made MARS the favourite of VENUS!

* It was the custom for the consuls, before they left the city to preside over their respective provinces, to appoint MARS their deputy as it were in Rome, by paying a visit to his temple, and shaking the spear which his statue held in the right hand, exclaiming "*Mars, vigila!*"—"Watch, O Mars!" An admonition to which the deity of course paid the most profound attention!

This gallant had a furious *penchant* for cracking of pericraniums, hacking of bodies, and cutting of throats*, and was consequently supposed to preside over the combats of gladiators, duels, &c. and was imagined to be present at every engagement of consequence—A charming situation for a deity, most assuredly!—Yet horrid as the superstition appears, which placed a *God* at the head of those scenes of human carnage, at which nature sickens, the ancients committed a still more shocking error, in placing there a *Goddess*, whom they called

BELLONA,

the sister of MARS, who drove his thundering car o'er slaughtered thousands.—For it was the custom of former times for their heroes to fight in open chariots, something like our phaetons, but extremely low. In these they stood and threw their javelins,

* The ancients offered to the God of War, horses on account of their martial spirit, the vulture and the wolf for their fierceness, and the magpye for its voracity.—Dog-grass was laid on his altars, because it is supposed to grow in fields of battle.

while their charioteers, who stood before, directed the horses, and urged them forward.

This part BELLONA performed for her throat-cutting brother—a most amiable employment for a female! Yet, wonderful to tell, in former times, (nay, within these ten years,) women *have* appeared in the ranks of death, and, forgetting that their destination was to *soothe*, have helped to *increase* the miseries of man!

This charming goddess was greatly venerated by the Romans, who gave audience to ambassadors and generals in her temple.

Their mode of declaring war was, by throwing a spear against a pillar which stood near the gate, and was called "the column of war!"

The priests of BELLONA had an ugly mode of shewing their devotion, viz. by whipping a knife into their legs, arms, or bodies, and making a decent gash, the size of which they supposed testified the fervour of their adoration. I should have protested very *feelingly* against this ceremony, had I

been one of them, and should have voted for changing it into a cutting and slicing of a sirloin of beef, or an excellent plum pudding!

After the savage God who is so generally a favourite with mankind, because he teaches them the art of rendering each other miserable, I shall present to my dear and amiable pupil his complete opposite, in the person of

APOLLO,

(Appendix B.) otherwise, though incorrectly, called PHŒBUS, or SOL. He was the patron of poetry, music, and learning, of the sciences and arts. Under the name of PHŒBUS, according to the generality of authors, he represented the sun, and was supposed to traverse the skies in a burning chariot, drawn by horses who breathed fire. After the hard labour of lashing his coursers round the globe, it was imagined that he sunk into the ocean, and reposed in the arms of his favourite THETIS, a marine goddess—(for the ancients, with the exception of a few philoso-

phers, had not the smallest idea of the earth's revolving round the sun*.)

APOLLO had a son, PHAETON, from whom the modern carriage of that name is probably derived. This hot-headed youth, partaking too much of the fire of his father, prevailed on him to grant permission that he might direct the chariot for one day, in place of his illustrious parent. He mounted with great courage, but soon, dazzled by the blaze of his equipage, the furious plunges, and flaming nostrils of his terrific horses, he lost his presence of mind, and dropped the golden reins. His raging coursers, now uncontrouled, flew o'er the boundless paths of heaven, rushed flaming towards the earth, scorched the panting fields, and made the ocean boil†. JOVE, fearful the whole globe would be reduced

* The great Pythagoras first discovered this fact, but no credit was given to his opinion. Copernicus afterwards revived his system, and sir Isaac Newton confirmed it.

† The ancients fancied this unlucky error of Phaeton had occasioned the dark colour of the Africans, who were burnt up, they say, by the near approach of the chariot of the sun!

to cinders, hurled a thunderbolt at the imprudent charioteer, and precipitated him to earth. A God was then dispatched to conduct the empty chariot, and PHŒBUS was left to regret the fatal rashness of his child! How often has the imprudence of our modern Phaetons been in like manner punished by their fiery coursers! Give me rather a plain, jog-trotting nag, who, like his master, would have a greater regard for the safety of his neck, than the dashing appearance he might chance to make!

But let us return to his immortal parent:—APOLLO, among his other titles, was the president of the Muses, nine virgins, who resided on Mount Parnassus, and were the patronesses of Poetry and Music. In fact, they might be called APOLLO's female privy council. These fair damsels are so often invoked by the poets, that you must have frequently met with their names.—I am happy to be able to introduce you to these young ladies, as you will hereafter have reason to cultivate their acquaintance, for nature has certainly made my sweet ***** a devotee to their attractions!

Apollo, as a poet, was of course a lover too, and numerous indeed were his amours. One damsel, to escape his pursuit, was changed into a laurel, with a branch of which his head was ever afterwards crowned, and which has been for ages the reward of the illustrious poet, the warrior, and the king. A second fair-one melted into a streamlet, (the same whom you saw at Miss Linwood's) and so eluded her ardent lover. —But to enumerate his gallantries would be too tedious a task—suffice it to add, that

ESCULAPIUS

was one of his most distinguished children, and was raised to a God for his services to mankind.—Jupiter, it is said, was offended with Esculapius, for restoring the dead to life again, and struck him with thunder, at which Apollo was so indignant, that he killed the Cyclops who fabricated the thunder; by which piece of violence he got banished from the skies for nine years, during which time he tended the flocks of Admetus.

Esculapius is generally represented leaning on a staff, round which is twisted a serpent; a reptile sacred to him, not, as some authors supposed, because physicians formerly made use of them in medicine, but because the serpent is an emblem of health, or prolonged life, from the circumstance of their casting their skins, and appearing to enjoy renovated youth.

But to conclude the history of his illustrious papa.—One of the most celebrated exploits of Apollo is, the conquest of the serpent Python, whom he slew with his terrible arrows; and it is from the moment in which his shaft has pierced the foe that the inimitable statue is supposed to be taken, which has for so many years attracted the admiration of the world, under the name of the Apollo Belvidere.

Apollo had a celebrated statue erected to him by the Rhodians, called the Colossus.—It was esteemed one of the seven wonders of the world, was formed of brass, and was nearly one hundred and five feet in height.—It stood across the harbour of Rhodes, and from its immense elevation, the ships which entered the port were not

under the necessity of lowering their sails. But at the same time it must be understood, that the ships in those ages were not like our modern men of war, some of whose masts are higher than the head of the Colossus; but that the vessels of the Rhodians and other ancient nations were merely gallies, little larger than our Gravesend boats or Margate hoys.

This enormous statue was the work of Chares, who laboured twelve years to complete it.—In the inside was a winding staircase, by which persons might ascend to the top.—It was thrown down by an earthquake, after having stood many years, and remained in ruins near nine centuries, till the Saracens, A. D. 672, sold it to a Jewish merchant, who loaded no less than nine hundred camels with the brass!

This Colossus, mighty as it was, is yet exceeded by one in a neighbouring nation, whose stride already comprehends the half of Europe, and who, having lately placed a crown upon his head, eagerly longs to extend his imperial foot to the extremities of the globe!

The contracted limit of my plan obliges

me to quit the most interesting of the Gods, who seems now to share the empire of mankind with MARS; as the sole employment of men appears at present to be, to increase their knowledge, and lessen their numbers!

Let us then bid adieu to the ardent PHŒBUS, whose fiery coursers, now almost exhausted by their own fury, and their rapid gallop round the globe, are languidly descending the horizon, and will presently disappear behind the hills, and welcoming tender and pensive evening, give the hour of twilight to agreeable meditation.—I need not add, that the subject of *my* reveries will be virtue, talent, and innocence in the form of *****.

LETTER III.

My dreams of last night were visited by the objects which filled my mind yesterday, and I thought at one time I beheld Jupiter devouring Metis; at another, Neptune stilling the angry waves of the tempestuous ocean; and presently, embosomed in the calm and silent depths of a shady wood, I listened with pity to the lamentations which the Goddess of beauty poured out, over the drooping head of her beloved Adonis, while the rose, (before rivalling the lily in whiteness) blushed to a deep red with the blood which its thorns had drawn from the Queen of Paphos, as she rushed through the bushes to the relief of her hapless and imprudent lover.

Apropos—I have not yet given you the history of this powerful and enchanting divinity.—

VENUS

was supposed to have arisen from the froth of the sea, (perhaps in allusion to the beauty derived from bathing) and is as well known for the Goddess of beauty, as her son CUPID (of whom MARS was the father) is for the malicious tyrant of hearts.—Had I lived in that age, I should have voted for conferring the honour of having given birth to love, not to *beauty*, but to *virtue*, for surely *genuine* affection has no other parent.

VENUS (like many modern fair-ones) did not add prudence to her other charms;—though married to VULCAN, (Appendix c) (the God of fire, and blacksmith of the skies,) yet her amours were but too extensive.—She was far from confining her favours to MARS alone; and indeed the general characters of both Gods and Goddesses in this particular, is, it must be confessed, not quite unexceptionable.

Is it not wonderful that the human race could ever entertain such opinions of superior beings, or that so believing, they could be ever virtuous? One thing, indeed, in

favour of morality, was, that they imagined a superior nature was ever present, as they conceived every river, mountain, or tree, to be the residence of a supernatural being. This was some check upon their actions.

But to resume our subject—The residence of VENUS (who was also called *Cytherea*) was at *Paphos*, now the island of Cyprus.—Hence she is often called the "*Paphian Queen*;" and those females, (the most wretched of the human race) who have sacrificed their honour and happiness to an imitation of her, are styled *Cyprians*.

The conduct of this lady, it must be confessed, gave her but too much title to be considered as the patroness of these imprudent fair-ones—for her amours were indeed extremely extensive.—We find that she had a great variety of children, particularly CUPID, ANTEROS, and HERMIONE, by MARS; ERYX, by NEPTUNE, &c. &c. It is well known that ANCHISES and ADONIS were also honoured by her favours, and that the former was struck with lightning for his imprudence in boasting of his happiness.

She is said to have worn a *cestus* or *zone*, (like the band that fastens your gown) which possessed the wonderful quality of conferring beauty on the wearer, however deformed. This *cestus* is no other than the inimitable grace, the *je ne scai quoi*, which gives female beauty its greatest charm, its most bewitching power.—But why need I explain it?—It is that charm which beams from *****'s eyes, plays in her smile, enchants in her look, delights in her motions,—which in short *must* be felt, but *cannot* be expressed.

The names and offices of VENUS were as various as the sentiments of those who adored her; whence she came to be considered under the very different lights in which she is represented by authors.—Accordingly we find her mentioned under the titles of "*Philommeis*," or "Queen of Laughter;" "*Mechanites*," or "the artful;" "*Apaturia*," "the deceitful;" and "*Verticordia*," because she *turned the hearts* of women towards virtue; "*Anadyomene*," or born of the sea—in which character she was represented by the celebrated statuary Phidias, and Apelles, the immortal painter, rising

from the waves, and wringing the water from her beautiful hair.—But the grand distinctions of character in this Goddess are, between the VENUS *Pandemos*, and the VENUS *Urania*. The first supposing her to patronise every species of sensual passion; the latter considering her as presiding over virtuous and chaste affection, in which light the artist must certainly have intended to represent her, who formed that immortal statue, which is still an object of astonishment and admiration to the judicious spectator, under the well-known appellation of the VENUS *de Medicis*.

Some authors, however, seem to attach to her name a third and still more philosophical idea, viz. that of nature, or the first cause of life and being, as we shall perceive by turning to Lucretius, whose apostrophe to this deity is so beautiful as to tempt me to quote it:—It begins with that charming passage—

> " Hominum divumque voluptas,
> " Alma Venus, cœli subter labentia signa," &c. &c.

which Dr. Hunter has so well translated,

retaining the sense as well as the spirit of the original:—

"Venus, all hail! of Gods and Men the pride,
Mov'd by whose power, the heavenly bodies glide
In mystic round: thine is the teeming earth;
To thee the swelling ocean owes his birth.—
Source of all life! thou breath'st the living soul,
And kindlest joy, 'from Indus to the Pole.'—
At thy approach the noisy tempests cease,
The air grows pure, and all the world is peace;
For thee the spring her flowery mantle waves,
For thee Autumnus piles his golden sheaves;
The placid deep reflects a clearer ray,
And Sol emits through heaven a brighter day.

. . . .

Since, Goddess, thus all own thy sovereign power,
Since without thee none sees the natal hour,
Without thee nought of fair, of sweet is seen,
Delight of nature! Universal queen!
Visit thy bard with some celestial dream;
Be thou my muse, for nature is my theme.

. . . .

Around my lays thy winning graces shed,
So shall immortal honours crown my head!"

Of the malicious

CUPID*,

(though my liege lord and sovereign master)

* The infinite variety of modes in which the mischievous little fellow is depicted by the fancy of the

I shall say little; for himself, his blindness, his bow and darts, and his mother's doves, are so universally known, that I need not enlarge upon them.—I have already said he was the son of MARS, and indeed his disposition is a pretty good proof of his descent; for though rapture sometimes accompanies his darts, yet too often his wounds, like his father's, distract the soul with anguish, and leave no hope of a termination of torture,

poets precludes the possibility of enumeration; but these delineations may be generally reduced to two classes, the one of which is principally allusive to his infancy, (as playing with a swan, catching butterflies, &c.) while in the other his unlimited power over gods and men is expressed, by giving him the armour of MARS, the club of HERCULES, or the thunderbolts of JUPITER.—He is very frequently and classically placed on the back of a lion, in which posture we have an admirable picture of him, by a modern artist.

CUPID, like his mother, had a double character; for while the wise and virtuous part of mankind considered him as the deity of pure and rational affection, others, who made him the son of NOX and EREBUS, (night and darkness) worshipped him as the patron of lewdness and debauchery. It is but too strongly suspected, that the modern beaus have wholly dismissed the *first* divinity, and are only acquainted with the *latter*, to whom, it must be allowed, they pay their adoration in a most fervent manner!

but by the cold, yet friendly, hand of death, who (grim-looking tyrant as he is) may perhaps be reckoned the best friend of unhappy man. And so the ancients thought; for they had a tradition, that a priestess who could not be taken in triumph to the temple, as was customary at festivals, on account of the great mortality among the oxen, (who were yoked to the chariot instead of horses) had two sons, whose filial piety induced them to supply the places of the deceased animals, and draw their mother to the altar. She was so delighted with this proof of their affection, that she publicly entreated the Gods to grant them the best gift they could bestow. The prayer was granted, and the youths found the next morning dead!

But how came I to get into this melancholy mood? When writing to *****, my mind ought surely to partake of the spirit of that being for whose sake it is employed, and become, if not *gay*, at least serene!—

To turn, then, to a more pleasing theme— The next God whom I shall present to the view of my fair pupil is one who is the natural (though now neglected) companion of Love and Venus!—

Yes! to thee will I address myself—Author of every bliss that sweetens life, and renders this dull vale of woe an antepast of Elysium!

HYMEN

in the ancient mythology did not rank so high as I have placed him, but I do not pursue the strict line of precedence; besides, I think him entitled to much greater distinction than is usually allotted to him.—I am of opinion that the happiness or misery of life depend on the choice we make at his altar. If led there by virtue and sincere affection, his mild and balmy influence heals every wound; but if impure or trifling motives accompany us thither, his vindictive lash renders every future year an increase of torture. So much for the importance of the God of whom I speak, and whose choicest blessings are, I hope, in store for my dear and amiable pupil.

Hymen was a young man of Greece, who, being deeply enamoured of a virgin, disguised himself in female apparel, to enjoy

the pleasure of her company. Walking one day with a party of ladies on the sea-shore, a band of pirates seized, and carried them off.—HYMEN, when on board, discovered his sex to the virgins, and proposed a plan for their deliverance, which by his valour and address succeeded. HYMEN then left his fair companions on an island, and returned to Greece, where, resuming his own dress, he informed the senate that he would undertake to rescue the females who had been captured, on condition that he might choose one of them for a wife. To this their parents, who were ignorant of their safety, gave a ready consent; and HYMEN, returning to the island, soon restored his companions to their mother's arms, and received his mistress's hand. They lived such perfect examples of connubial happiness, that after their deaths HYMEN was numbered among the Gods, and considered as the patron of marriage. His insignia are a saffron-coloured robe, and a lighted torch. May that torch be soon kindled for thee, and the choicest blessings of the state be thine!

As I cannot expect to find a better wish, with which to conclude this letter, and as nine pages are a pretty good task even on the inexhaustible patience of my placid and amiable pupil, I must finish this scrawl, by wishing it may convey some pleasure to her, whose presence gives pleasure to all!

LETTER IV.

You certainly flatter me, my dear pupil, when you assure me, that my last scribble did not exhaust your patience, or draw from you a tremendous yawn, which I expected would for a moment have distorted the symmetry of your features. But as flattery is too often agreeable, I shall, like other weak mortals, swallow it most readily from you, and, upon the strength o your compliments, return with new vigour to the history of our antique acquaintance.

I think I have informed my sister that

MERCURY

was the God of thieves and of eloquence—a curious association! The first honour he

probably acquired from the dexterity with which he contrived to rob one of the celebrated personages of antiquity of a flock of sheep; the other from his insinuating address. He was also minister plenipotentiary and envoy extraordinary to the Gods, confident of JUPITER, and tutelary deity of merchants.

He is supposed to have acted the honourable part of go-between, as well as running footman, for his royal master; and was so perfectly skilled in the art of conveyanceing (or more properly conveying away,) that he was fabled to have stolen the trident of Neptune, zone of Venus, sceptre of Jove, sword of Mars, and arrows of Apollo.

This gentleman was a person of most infinite business, and may be styled the factotum of the skies. He is never painted as being very corpulent, which is no wonder, considering how abominably he was fagged; running about all day, on some errand or other; flying at one moment from heaven to earth with a message, the next scampering after a nymph for signor Jupiter, and shortly after perhaps for himself; besides having every now and then to listen to the

prayers of the Roman merchants, who offered sacrifices of sows, calves, and tongues to him, and entreated him to excuse all the lies, rogueries, and tricks, they had practised in trade. These were in general so numerous, that he had not time enough to spare to give each a separate white-washing, but was obliged to do it by wholesale, passing a general bull or dispensation under his great seal, which enabled them to begin again.

He is represented as a handsome young man, with small wings at his heels, (for the ancient Gods, like modern statesmen, having no objection to a plurality of places, had made him their messenger, as well as minister in ordinary and extraordinary).—In his hand he bore a caduceus, which had the property of compelling ghosts to obey his commands. This gentleman, to complete the list of his employments, being also a kind of master of the ceremonies to departed spirits, and their introducer to the realms below. But I must not forget to mention another quality of the caduceus*, viz. the power of throwing any one into a

* The caduceus was a rod or sceptre, round which two serpents were entwined.

deep sleep; and I much fear, notwithstanding her flattery, that my fair reader will imagine there is, in this respect, a great resemblance between the aforesaid caduceus and these charming pages!—So much for master MERCURY.

I forget whether in my former pages I have mentioned the name of

CERES,

the Goddess of the earth, or perhaps of the harvest. Her daughter

PROSERPINE

was carried off, and married by PLUTO, the tremendous monarch of the lower regions. The story is, that she was ordered by the celestial powers to reside half the year with her husband below, the rest with her mother above. Now I conceive this part of the fable to be intended to signify, that the *fruits of the earth* remain under ground part of the year, and are *above* it the remainder: in which opinion some very able writers coincide.

HECATE was supposed to be but another name for PROSERPINE. She was sometimes represented with three heads, sometimes with three bodies, and was much reverenced by the Romans. Her statue was placed at the doors of houses, and every new moon a public supper was provided by the wealthy citizens, which HECATE was supposed to consume during the night, but which I need not add, was prevented from spoiling by the poorer classes of the community. I am persuaded that the populace of London would be very glad to see these *Hecatesia* established here; but I presume their votes would have run strongly in favour of having them every night, instead of only once a month.

The venerable mamma of mademoiselle HECATE (alias PROSERPINE), the respectable CERES, is represented as crowned with turrets (an emblem of cities) drawn in a chariot by lions, and bearing a sheaf of corn in her lap. At other times we find her under the less elevated character of a female peasant, seated on an ox, holding in one hand a hoe,

in the other a basket. In Sicily her statues appeared with a horse's head; while in other representations she rides in a chariot drawn by dragons.

This divinity is supposed to be the same deity as Cybele, Rhea, &c. and was also called the *Bona Dea,* under which name her mysterious worship was observed with profound secrecy and great solemnity by the Roman matrons. Any one intruding upon the celebration of these mysteries, who was not initiated, was condemned to expiate the offence with his life; and Cicero makes it one of the heaviest charges against Catiline, that he had prophaned the mysteries of the *Bona Dea.*

The Eleusinian mysteries in Greece were of a similar nature, and considered as one of the most important parts of religious worship, insomuch that the initiated were supposed to become more peculiarly the objects of divine superintendence than those who had not been admitted to the celebration.

The principal part of the history of this Goddess is to be found interwoven with that of her daughter Proserpine, and her hus-

band PLUTO, who, I have already said, was the commander in chief of the souls who had departed this life. The ancients conceived that both the places of reward and punishment were beneath the earth. The one was called the Elysian Fields (which I shall again have occasion to mention), where charming groves, delightful rivers, and all that can enchant the senses, were the portion of the virtuous. On the contrary side, the dreary realms of Tartarus presented for the vicious whips, chains, and flames.

Among other classes of criminals who were condemned to this terrible fate were those who were the authors of cruel and unnecessary wars. Alas! if the Christian system of future punishment is on the same principle, how many modern conquerors have occasion to tremble for futurity!

These awful dominions were encircled by a dark stream called STYX, over which the shades were ferried by an old boatman named CHARON, who had a small piece of money for his fare. The history of this river is very extensive. In the first place, it rendered any one who was dipped in it invulnerable; as we see by ACHILLES, the fa-

mous Grecian. In the next place, it was the stream by which the Gods swore, when they took their most sacred oaths; who were banished from heaven for a hundred years* if they broke their vows. Lastly, it was impassible to mortals, with the exception of a few heroes, among whom the most distinguished were ENEAS and TELEMACHUS.—ENEAS, the chief actor in Virgil's celebrated poem the Eneid, the only prince of consequence who escaped the destruction of Troy, and from whom the Romans claimed their descent;—TELEMACHUS, the son of the renowned Grecian ULYSSES, in pursuit of whom he traversed the earth.—But for his history I refer you to Fenelon. HERCULES and ULYSSES also crossed it, as you will find in their respective histories.

After the dead had passed this stream, they underwent a trial before three judges, viz. MINOS†, ÆCUS and RHADAMANTHUS.

To this account let me add a piece of information for the benefit of my sister,

* According to some authors, only nine years.

† MINOS, the president, was a king of the island of Crete, remarkable for his justice, and the excellent laws which he enacted.

which is known but to few; viz. that this singular fable had a great foundation in truth.—In Egypt, where most of the ancient mythology took its rise, a remarkable custom was observed. When any of their kings died, a council sat, who canvassed all the actions he had done during his reign. If he had governed ill, his memory was declared infamous, and his body treated with indignity: if well, an eulogium was pronounced upon him, and his remains conveyed across the lake MEOTIS, to the magnificent pyramids, in which they were buried. At least such is the general opinion; though some very able and acute writers have supposed these immense edifices to be really temples—a supposition which they support by many sound arguments, and among others from their very shape, which is in imitation of a flame*; and it is well known that fire was one of the earliest objects of worship. Be that as it may, these stupendous erections are certainly objects of the utmost surprise and curiosity. There are great numbers of them scattered in various direc-

* The name *pyramid* is derived from the Greek *pyros*, flame or fire.

tions; but the three principal ones are near Ghiza, the largest of which is supposed to cover no less than eleven acres of ground, and to be at least five hundred feet high!

The entrance to the gloomy realms of PLUTO was supposed to be by a cave which still exists in Italy. I think it is the *Grotto del cane*, in English, *the cave of dogs*, because a dog thrown into it is soon stifled by the noxious vapours which arise from the ground.

I forgot to mention that the road to these domains, which one would have thought required no guard to terrify mortals from passing, was yet watched by a dog named CERBERUS, with three heads, who, however, (like many other guardians) might be quieted by a sop. HERCULES dragged this growling cur from his station up to the earth, but afterwards suffered him to resume his post, for fear all the ghosts should escape out of Tartarus.

On the subject of porter to this charming place, I recollect a curious anecdote. An old Galic bard*, the last of the race exist-

* The extraordinary race of bards, or travelling poets, who rambled about with their harps, composing extempore verses, and singing traditionary poems (a race once

ing in Britain, and who was still alive a few years since, used to reside at the house of a gentleman, to whose cellar he was in the habit of paying pretty frequent visits. The butler, who was somewhat of a morose turn, once refused him a glass of his favourite beverage, on which the irritated poet immediately composed the following lines extempore:

"What a pity hell's gates are not kept by O'Flin:
"Such a surly old dog would let nobody in!"

But to our subject again.—STYX was not the only stream which watered these sombre regions, as we find no less than four others mentioned in history, viz. ACHERON, COCYTUS, PHEGETHON, and LETHE. The latter well known for the power its waters possessed of making him who drank them forget every thing he had known. Thus, how often do we read of a Lethean draught—a draught I have sometimes wished for—

spread all over Europe, under the titles of troubadours, minstrels, &c.) continued to flourish in Ireland and some other parts of the British dominions till a very late period. Several of them remained in the beginning of the last century; but the last of them, the person of whom the anecdote is related, expired at an advanced age some years since.

But no! I would not wish to forget the beneficence of my Creator.

But surely our long stay in these dreary dominions must have almost suffocated you. Let us then bid adieu to these dark regions, and return to-morrow to the inhabitants of the skies.

LETTER V.

UNDISTURBED by the barkings of CERBERUS, or the awful sounds of TARTARUS, I slept as soundly as if I had taken the Lethean draught, which in my last I deprecated, and waked so late this morning, as almost to blush when I saw how far the active PHŒBUS had lashed his fiery steeds.

Lest you should not have been favoured with repose as sound, I must try the Spanish doctor's recipe, and see if the watchfulness of my dear patient is proof against the history of

HERCULES*,

the God of Strength, which is so long, that it is almost impossible to give you even an

* Supposed to be derived from the Celtic *er-chuil* or *her-cuil*, "*hero of the club*," a weapon with which he usually appears armed.

abstract of it. He conquered lions, serpents, centaurs, robbers, and giants. One of his most celebrated actions was, the destruction of the HYDRA, a dreadful serpent with seven heads, which were no sooner cut off, than seven others started up in their place. By crushing them with his club, searing them with hot irons, &c., he at length subdued it.

He was condemned to submit to twelve arduous labors, by the hatred of JUNO. JUPITER was his father—a sufficient reason for JUNO's indignation. However, he overcame every thing by his dauntless courage, gigantic strength, and unwearied perseverance.

This same gentleman had special strong arms, and a very pretty mode of embracing. Thank Heaven, I did not live in those times; for as he was much addicted to a trick of hugging, witness the Giant ANTÆUS, whom he smothered in his arms, he might perhaps have served me in like manner if I had chanced to have offended him, and I hate such Cornish hugs most amazingly.

In literary compositions, frequent mention is made of the Hydra, and the Augean Sta-

ble, alluding to the vices and corruption of the times. Thus in speaking of my fair friend, I might say, her virtues were such that their influence would be almost sufficient to destroy the hydra of vice. On the other hand, if a patriot attacks the corruption of courts, he is said to aim at cleansing the Augean Stable. This stable belonged to AUGIAS, King of Elis, and contained an immense number of oxen, whose filth had collected for many years. HERCULES, by his uncommon strength and perseverance, turned the course of a river, so as to direct it through the stable, and rid it of its long accumulated impurities.

Among his numerous victories we must not forget that which he achieved in his cradle, at eight months old; when JUNO having sent two snakes to destroy him, he caught hold of them by the nape of the neck, and gave them such a pretty gripe as to choak them on the spot. Famous strong fingers for a baby! No wonder he was so expert at squeezing when he arrived at years of maturity!

The conquest of the Nemean lion is said to have been the first of HERCULES' labours,

and that the sight of the huge beast, though dead, so terrified EURYSTHEUS* (the prince to whose command he was compelled by the decrees of the Gods to become subservient), that he caused a vessel of brass to be made, into which he retired whenever HERCULES paid him a visit. A snug retreat enough, to be sure, but rather an odd one!

To the conquest of this lion (whose skin he afterwards constantly wore) succeeded the HYDRA, the stag of ŒNOE, (which HERCULES, being somewhat heavily built, had to scamper after for a year, before he caught it) —The boar of ERYMANTHUS (whose terrible tusks alarmed EURYSTHEUS to such a degree, that for several days he durst not put more than the tip of his nose on the

* I believe I have mentioned in another part of these pages, that Jupiter declared in the assembly of the Gods one day, that a child (meaning Hercules) would that evening be born, who should bear sway over even his own offspring; which JUNO hearing, she made him confirm his declaration by an appeal to the sacred river Styx, and then immediately delayed the delivery of Alcmena (the mother of the hero) while she hastened that of Eurystheus's mamma, by which artifice that prince came into the world before Hercules, and therefore, according to Jupiter's oath, bore authority over the favourite child whom he had intended to exalt.

outside of his brazen tub)—The Stables of AUGIAS—The STYMPHALIDES, ravenous birds who injured the country of ARCADIA, (like the harpies) and who received their name from the lake STYMPHALUS—The Cretan bull—The mares of DIOMEDES—The obtaining the girdle of HIPPOLITE, queen of the Amazons.—The killing of the giant GERYON, king of Gades (now Cadiz in Spain), and bringing away his flocks which fed on human flesh—The procuring apples from the garden of the HESPERIDES, and the bringing on earth PLUTO's lap-dog.

He also killed the three-headed, fire-and-smoke-puffing robber, CACUS, who had stolen some of his cattle, a theft which HERCULES discovered by the cows in CACUS's cave lowing, and being answered by those which remained with the hero. He conquered the giant who had rebelled against the Monarch of Heaven—the cruel Egyptian king, BUSIRIS, who offered up as victims to JUPITER all strangers who entered his dominions, and was served in the same manner for his pains!—and the giant ERYX, who challenged every one to fight him with the

Cestus, and at last caught a Tartar, and got his head broken.

Besides all these victories, he performed many other actions too tedious to enumerate, some of which are introduced in other parts of this work, particularly his adventure with ACHELOUS, NESSUS, &c. His death you will find under the head of DEJANIRA.

Accident has rescued from the ravages of time a very fine production of ancient sculpture, which is considered by most judges as a model of manly strength. It is called the Farnesian Hercules, from being originally in the possession of the family of Farnese. It represents the hero leaning on his club, his limbs of amazing size, and the muscles most vigorously delineated. But this statue, celebrated as it is, has been very strictly criticised; and Dr. Moore, in particular, has passed a critique upon it, so full of genuine taste, and just reasoning, that I must allow myself the satisfaction of introducing some of his observations. "I will venture to assert," says the doctor, "that the Farnese Hercules is faulty both in his form and attitude. The former is too unwieldy for active exertion, and the latter ex-

hibits vigour exhausted. A resting attitude is surely not the most proper in which the all-conquering God of strength could be represented. Rest implies fatigue, and fatigue strength exhausted. A reposing Hercules is almost a contradiction. Invincible activity and inexhaustible strength are his characteristics. The ancient artist has erred, not only in giving him an attitude which supposes his strength wants recruiting, but in the nature of the strength itself, the character of which should not be passive, but active."

But to return to his history.—The ancients had no trifling idea of the strength of this gentleman, for they supposed that the mountain of Abila, in Africa, was formerly joined to that of Calpe, in Spain, but that HERCULES separated them, and thus opened a communication into the Atlantic Ocean, from the Mediterranean.

The mountains are only eighteen miles distant from each other, and this very small distance is supposed to have given rise to the fable I have mentioned, and thus procured to these two rocks the name of "The Columns of Hercules!"

I must not omit to inform you of one circumstance which happened to this hero, because it shews the influence of your soft sex over the most powerful and rugged of men.

Hercules in his travels met with a queen, (OMPHALE) of whom he became enamoured. She, fond of shewing her power (like other females), arrayed herself in his lion's skin, poized his dreadful club in her beauteous hands, and gave him the female employment of attending her spinning-wheel! —Oh! woman, woman! if thy influence was always exerted on the side of virtue, what a world would this be!

I fear I have hitherto omitted to mention the Goddess

VESTA,

the supposed mother of all the great Heathen Deities, who presided over fire.— "As pure as a vestal virgin" is a common expression, arising from the Romans chusing young females for the priestesses of this divinity, at so early an age as (they imagined) insured a certainty of their possessing the brightest jewel in the female character.

Whether this precaution would succeed in modern times, or if it was sufficient then, I shall not investigate; but merely add, that if an error was discovered in their conduct in this point, they were buried alive—a punishment which likewise became their lot, if they suffered the sacred fire to go out, which was ordained to be burning for ever.

It was ENEAS who first introduced the worship of VESTA into Italy, but NUMA was the founder of her temple at Rome. Into this sanctuary no male was allowed to enter. The *palladium* was by some authors supposed to be preserved in it, as was also the *ancile*, or sacred shield, which it was pretended fell from heaven in Numa's reign, and on which the safety of the city depended; in consequence of which eleven more were made to resemble it, that any one who attempted to steal it might be puzzled in his choice, and probably take a wrong one. These shields were carried annually in sacred triumph round the walls of Rome.—A festival which lasted three days, during which no business of consequence was undertaken, as nothing transacted

during the time was supposed to succeed. —Even marriages were deferred till the solemnity was completed. Deuce take their ceremonies! Had I been on the point of matrimony, I should have wished the shields at mount Caucasus.

The vestal virgins were treated with such high respect, that even the consuls made way for them; and they had the power of pardoning a criminal going to execution, provided the meeting was accidental. In Italy the presence of a female of quite a different description saves the life of an offender, on condition the lady takes him for a husband!—Query!—Have any unfortunate malefactors ever had the folly to accept of the alternative?

After such saucy observations on your charming sex, I dare not proceed, lest I should be condemned to receive five hundred blows with your fan.—I must therefore drop lady VESTA and her virgins for the present, and shall defer paying my devoirs to two other belles of OLYMPUS till to-morrow, when I purpose to introduce to your acquaintance the severe DIANA, and the sage PALLAS, whose ta-

lents still exist, united to the purity of VESTA, in the person of the fair friend to whose service these trifling scribbles are dedicated.

LETTER VI.

In pursuance of my threat of yesterday, behold a tremendous packet already, filled with the cruelties of Diana, who was indeed a most furious prude.—Nor have I a much better character to give you of the grave and philosophical

MINERVA,

the Goddess of Wisdom, who, as I have already informed you, sprung in full armour from Jupiter's head.—She carries on her helmet an owl, the bird of wisdom (for the ancients, as well as the moderns, took the gravity of stupidity for a proof of sense), and bears on her arm the shield called *Ægis*. This shield has Medusa's frightful head on it, encircled by snakes, and he who looked on the hideous figure was instantly converted into stone!

MINERVA was often called PALLAS, and frequently the blue-eyed, or virgin Goddess. She patronised all the arts and sciences, and often engaged in the political and martial contests both of mortals and divinities.—The cock, and other warlike birds, were sacred to her; while the olive, the emblem of peace, was also dedicated to her ladyship.

In fact, she seems to have been a deity of very universal qualifications. She was rather masculine in appearance; yet notwithstanding this circumstance, and her being the female book-worm of the skies, she yet, like other ladies, was sensible to a desire of bearing off the prize of beauty from all competitors: witness her contest with JUNO and VENUS, for the golden apple of discord.

She was as vain of her talents as of her charms, and as bitterly resentful to all who presumed to dispute her pre-eminence.—Poor ARACHNE was a melancholy instance of the truth of this assertion.—She was an admirable spinster, and happening, as well as PALLAS, to possess a small share of

vanity, had the imprudence to challenge the Goddess to a trial of skill. Her work was so unexceptionable, that MINERVA, stung with envy, gave her a pat on the head with her shuttle, and changed the poor girl into a spider.—A curious mode of deciding her superiority of skill! yet perfectly consonant to modern practice; those who are possessed of power seeming thoroughly convinced, that virtue, talent, and logic, are all combined in those two short but energetic words—'I can,' and 'I will!'—Our royal logicians especially, appear not to retain a shadow of doubt on the subject!

The Gods in general seemed to be very universally guided by this infallible rule of equity, but madam MINERVA in particular had a most indisputable claim to be always in the right, for her power was superior to that of every other inhabitant of the heavens, except her papa JUPITER, whose pet she seems to have been, for he allowed her sometimes even to hurl his thunders—a delicate kind of commission, which he did not think it prudent to entrust to any other of his favourites.

DIANA,

you know, was the Goddess of the Moon, or as she is sometimes styled—" Queen of the Silver Bow." She was the deity who presided over chastity, a quality rather savage in her bosom; for she turned poor ACTEON into a stag, and had him torn in pieces by his own dogs, because the poor lad had the misfortune to pop in upon her while bathing. From this I suspect that she had bandy legs, and did not chuse he should divulge the secret.

I forgot to tell you, I believe, that although reckoned the Goddess of Chastity, she was suspected of not being always perfectly correct in that respect; and the scandalous chronicle of mount Olympus charges her with one *faux-pas* in particular, with a smart youth of the name of

ENDYMION.

This favoured mortal was a shepherd, who, as report says, had obtained from JUPITER two singular favours—the one to be always

young, the other to sleep as much as he pleased.—A request one would have rather expected from some fat, turtle-fed alderman. However, to return to his amours—Madam DIANA, in her nightly rounds, happened to catch a glimpse of him, while sleeping on mount Latmos, and thought he lay with an air so perfectly *degagée*, and snored so much like a nobleman, that it quite captivated her heart, and the tabbies of the sky whispered pretty loudly that from this time she no longer deserved the title of which she was so proud.

This fable is supposed to have taken its rise from ENDYMION being very fond of astronomy, and passing the night frequently on some elevated spot, to observe the motions of the heavenly bodies, which made his countrymen suppose he was courted by the moon.

DIANA is sometimes represented as HECATE, from the night being supposed to be the season chosen by witches for their terrible operations. She is also by some authors considered as LUCINA, while others make her the same as ISIS.

She is generally depicted as a huntress, with buskined legs, a sun-burnt countenance, and a quiver full of arrows. At other times she is placed in a chariot drawn by two white stags, or two heifers: while some statuaries give her the pleasing appearance of a female with three heads—those of a horse, a boar, and a dog.

Her worship was frequently very sanguinary and cruel, particularly at Taurica, now the Crimea, or, as it is sometimes styled, Crim Tartary. Here they offered up human victims to this savage Goddess. The Lacedemonians till the time of Lycurgus did the same; and in Aricia the priest of her temple was always a murderer, possessing his post by the assassination of his predecessor. These cruelties afford us an instructive lesson; for it is thus that the feelings of humanity are ever exterminated in the bosoms of those who think it a virtue to desert the duties for which they were created, and, banishing the social affections from their breasts, become savage strangers to their fellow beings, and aliens to all the finer sensibilities of nature.

It is fabled, that when the deities scampered out of heaven into Egypt, from fear of that ugly-looking youth master TYPHON, with his hundred fire-breathing heads, DIANA took the shape of a cat, to avoid his fury; and it is perhaps from that circumstance that grimalkin has become such a favourite with those acidulated imitators of madam Luna, usually styled old maids.

One celebrated God I am unpardonable for having omitted, viz.

JANUS,

a gentleman nearly allied to our modern statesmen, for he carried—"*two faces under one hood.*"—He was represented with one face looking back, and another forward—as if reflecting on the past, and foreseeing the future.

This deity was supposed to preside over prudence or forethought, so necessary in military affairs; from whence arose the custom of shutting his temple when the Romans held out the olive branch to mankind, and

their arms no longer threatened the repose of the world*. Ill-judging Romans!—It is during peace that prudence is more than ever necessary to preserve the vessel of the state from danger. It is the manners, the passions, the luxuries of the inhabitants, that decide the fate of a nation with more certainty than the chance of war! Rome was unconquered, was safe, was great, while yet Annibal thundered at its gates—for its inhabitants were virtuous! Mistress of the world, her eagles planted in every clime, Rome was feeble, was ruined, was enslaved; for vice ruled with her emperors, far more terrible than pretorian guards, infinitely more to be dreaded than Gauls, Goths, or Vandals!

But let me return to the divinity from whom I have digressed.—

JANUS was the monarch of the year, the first month of which, January, was named after him.—In this sense too he might be entitled to two heads, as if looking at once on the departing and the coming year.

* This temple was shut but thrice in seven hundred years!

The month over which the God of forethought ruled is, like himself, cold, dreary, and uncomfortable; thus is prudence, though necessary for the mental welfare of man, as winter is requisite for his corporeal wants; yet both blight the soft, the gay, and blooming buds of youthful hope!—Ah, cruel change!—Oh! parents, recollect that ye have once been young, and seek not, by lessons of too early prudence and distrust, to rob the spring of youth of its greatest attractions, and its dearest blessings!

But the day declines, the car of Phœbus disappears—I can no longer perceive even the traces of its wheels in the heavens—the shades of night descend, and my wearied pen drops from my hand!

LETTER VII.

AGAIN I wake from slumber, and from dreams of happiness. The seal of MORPHEUS, whose heavy curtain had shut out from my mind the cares and anxieties of life, is removed; and once more I perceive the rapid advance of SOL, for alas! with

AURORA*,

the Goddess of day-break, I am sorry to confess I am not much acquainted. I shall therefore say nothing of her ladyship, but "drink to our better acquaintance!"

* AURORA precedes Phœbus in a rose-coloured chariot (an allusion to the pale red colour generally seen on the skies a short time before the appearance of the sun). —She pours the dew upon the earth; while the flowers, refreshed, raise their drooping heads at her approach.—She is wrapped in a veil, because objects are not perfectly discernible at the first break of the morning; and the stars, with sleep and night, fly before her chariot.

HEBE,

the Goddess of youth, may be seen by turning to my dear *****; while

IRIS,

the fair lady of the rain-bow, and messenger of JUNO, is something like ******* in her poppies and plaid!

HEBE, by the bye, was daughter of JUPITER and JUNO, or, according to some authors, of JUNO only. Her mamma promoted her to the post of cup-bearer to the divinities of Olympus. This dignity she afterwards lost, by an unlucky slip, while handing nectar to one of the Gods, on a grand gala day; and was succeeded by GANYMEDE, a beautiful Trojan youth, for whom an eagle was immediately dispatched, with orders to snap him up into heaven in haste.

This account appears rather doubtful, if we consider that master JUPITER was much too partial to handsome legs to disgrace poor HEBE for happening to shew

hers. Be this as it may, she was afterwards obliged to confine herself to her other office, of taking care of her mamma's peacocks, till HERCULES was admitted among the Gods, when she proved the instrument of a reconciliation between him and JUNO, by giving her hand to that hero, by whom she had two sons, ANICETUS and ALEXIARES.

ÆOLUS,

the God of the winds, was a king, famous for the invention of sails—a discovery which has opened a wide field to the ingenuity of mankind!

FLORA, Goddess of flowers, and POMONA of fruit, are well known; but I shall mention one, little attended to by men—ASTREA, *the Goddess of Justice*; and another, still less worshipped by the ladies and myself—HARPOCRATES, the deity of silence—I am fonder of

MOMUS,

the grinning God of mirth and jokes; though he was rather too satirical, it must

be confessed. Some of his strictures are very curious. He observed upon a house which MINERVA had constructed, that it would have been complete had it been moveable, by which means the inhabitant might have easily retired from a bad neighbourhood—A most desirable qualification for many modern tenements!—Man himself did not appear perfect to his eyes, as he complained that there was no window in his breast, through which his thoughts and intentions might have been perceived.—Had this idea been carried into execution, what curious discoveries we should have had; and what ardent petitions for window-shutters would be daily made at the altars of the Gods, by our intriguing statesmen, subtle courtiers, designing hypocrites, and faithless lovers!—What strange rencounters would daily take place between rival politicians, prudes and coquettes, and what rich and inexhaustible subjects for the comic muse!—

THE SATYRS,

half man, half goat, still exist, and are headed by —— his Grace the **** of *********!—

FORTUNA,

or the Goddess Fortune*, I have hardly patience to mention, she has behaved so much like a jade to me.—I shall therefore leave her, and present to you a certain nag with whom I am better acquainted, viz.

PEGASUS,

a winged horse, who sprang from the blood of MEDUSA, and fixed his residence on mount Helicon. Accordingly, when any rash mortal takes a whim into his head to become a poet, he is said to mount PEGASUS.—This same Rosinante, by the bye, is a most mischievous and unlucky poney; for it has been observed from the earliest ages, that the poor mad-headed being who has once crossed his back is ever after unfortunate—his usual portion being a garret, a ragged coat, and bread and cheese.—I cannot pretend to say whether this courser is infected with any epidemic disorder; but certain it is that his riders are universally

* She is represented standing on a wheel scattering her gifts with a lavish hand, blindfolded.

avoided, every one flying from them, except a kind of vermin, resembling leeches, but usually known by the name of duns, bailiffs, &c. who torment the unlucky wight to a most intolerable degree.

I have already informed you that master APOLLO resided on mount Parnassus in a very comfortable style, with the nine Muses; and I must freely confess I much admire the good taste of my patron, in preferring such a bevy of pleasing, graceful, pretty lasses, to a set of time-serving, sneaking courtiers; and by Jupiter, if I am ever a monarch, I am determined that a woman shall rule my privy council!

I shall conclude this scrawl with the Goddess

HYGEIA,

or Health, the daughter of ESCULAPIUS, (a mistake by the bye, as she is the child, not of medicine, but of exercise and temperance) to whom mankind ought to hold themselves indebted for at least half their happiness; and yet how greatly, how grossly is she neglected! That she may ever shower

down her choicest blessings on the head of my dear and amiable pupil will always be the earnest wish and ardent prayer of her sincerely affectionate friend.

LETTER VIII.

If in my last I expatiated on the charms and blessings of health, I am to-day under the necessity of presenting to you a deity who is too often her most inveterate and decided enemy, though originally intended to be a friend, assistant, and support to her. Need I add, that the divinity I allude to is

BACCHUS,

the jolly God of wine, who must not, however, by any means pass unnoticed. He is too great a favourite with a large proportion of mankind, and it appears but too probable that his worship will continue in full force for ages.

He was the son of Jupiter and Semele, and when his mother prevailed on the mighty parent to come to her in his full majesty, this imprudence caused her death. She was

consumed by the insufferable splendour of her awful lover, and the infant of which she was pregnant was with difficulty saved from the flames, and translated to the thigh of JUPITER, where he remained two months.

On his arrival at years of maturity, he made a celebrated expedition into India, at the head of an army, composed of men, women, fawns, and satyrs, who instead of spears, swords, and bucklers, carried thyrsuses*, cymbals, flutes, lyres, &c. &c.

His conquests, if they can be so called, were rapid and easy; men readily submitting to a chief whose mode of attack was so pleasing. He taught them the use of the vine, of honey, the arts of agriculture, &c. &c.

Games were instituted in various places in honour of this deity, who is at one time represented as a boy, to intimate the childish openness of conviviality; at another, as an old man, to shew that excessive drinking produces premature old age; but his most general and classical appearance† is that

* A light spear encircled with vine branches.

† See the Abbé Winckelman, &c.

of a handsome young man, somewhat like an APOLLO, with long and beautiful hair.

He is universally crowned with clusters of grapes, vine-leaves, &c.

He is sometimes considered as OSIRIS, who performed the same part in Egypt, and is in that character represented with horns, as being supposed to have first discovered the utility of oxen in agriculture.

The magpie was sacred to him, from the loquacious freedom inspired by drinking; and the goat was sacrificed on his altars, on account of the great injury that animal does among the vines.

His festivals, called, from his name, BACCHANALIA, were scenes of unbounded licentiousness, debauchery, and immorality; and thence deservedly suppressed in many countries, upon experience of their evil effects. But though forbidden to be publicly observed, they were continued in private with full vigour, and unfortunately the moderns seem to find but too much gratification in performing his orgies.—His worship, thank Heaven, has somewhat decreased in this country; but still continues to flourish with our German neighbours.—

Even among ourselves, it has been shrewdly suspected that our reformation is principally owing, not to increasing civilisation, but to the heavy taxes which a celebrated financier has laid on certain articles, commonly called British and foreign spirits, wines, cordials, &c.

A deity extremely well known to moderns is to be found in the person of

PROTEUS,

supposed to be the son of OCEANUS and TETHYS; he was gifted with the power of prophesying, in consequence of which he was so much plagued by inquisitive mortals, that, to avoid their troublesome enquiries, he used to vary his shape a thousand ways, assuming at one time the figure of a lion, at others that of a fish, &c. &c.

This gentleman has many descendants who inherit the serviceable quality just alluded to: among these his posterity stand foremost our subtle statesmen, insinuating humble courtiers, and smiling, flattering, too often deceitful lovers; all of whom, it must be owned, are at least equal to their great original.

PITHO,

or the Goddess of persuasion, was represented holding in her hands thunder and fetters, to intimate the powerful effects of eloquence! Some of our modern statesmen might very well be compared to this Goddess, as they rule their countrymen by the force of their oratory. Messieurs **** and *** may be ranked as her high priests; and if we are to believe the assertions of rhetoricians on the other side of the question, they wield both the thunders and fetters of their divinity.

I had intended before now to have introduced to your notice signor

PLUTO,

who was the brother of Jupiter, and in the division of the world between himself, Neptune, and Jove, received the infernal regions, and every thing beneath the earth, as his portion. He is generally represented with a very grim and stern look, something like a modern catchpole, or gaoler, whom

he also resembled in bearing a bunch of keys, to intimate (say the ancients) that those who entered his domains must never expect to return. He also bore, instead of a sceptre, what some Hibernian authors have called a *trident* * with *two* teeth, to distinguish it from that of NEPTUNE. Probably these two teeth were allotted to PLUTO because the number two was considered as inauspicious.

He had a very pretty court in his subterraneous palace, composed of the furies, the harpies, and the fates, with his three-headed lapdog, Cerberus.

Thus surrounded, it is not very surprising that none of the Goddesses wished to leave the realms of light, to become his queen; and poor PLUTO, who found his situation somewhat lonely, was obliged to have recourse to "a little gentle violence," as the Murphys would call it. He had happened to catch a glimpse of mademoiselle PROSERPINE, daughter of CERES, as she was amusing herself on the plains of Sicily, making nosegays. The grim deity was of opinion she was the prettiest flower in

* That is a *three*-toothed instrument with *two* prongs.

the field; and whipping the damsel up under his arm, he popped her into his chariot, and scampered off with his prize in grand style. As her female attendants, however, pursued him, and he found their feet ran almost as fast as their tongues (the sound of which too might be rather unpleasant to his ears), he struck the earth with his sceptre, which opened, and down went my gentleman, PROSERPINE, and all. The attendants, enraged at being thus outwitted, screamed and scolded louder than ever, loud enough indeed to be almost heard by the monarch, even at the centre; but all this outcry was to no purpose—PLUTO had got his prize safe enough! Her mother CERES, however, when she was informed of the affair, demanded the restoration of her daughter, and required the interposition of JUPITER, who promised that PROSERPINE should be restored, if she had not eaten any thing in the dominions of PLUTO.—ASCALAPHUS revealed the fact, that the damsel had swallowed part of a pomegranate; for which information, as it decided the fate of her child, CERES instantly changed him into an owl.

The dispute, however, was at length terminated by an agreement (as I have elsewhere mentioned) between the contending parties, that the fair-one should reside six months with her mother, and the remaining six with her husband; an arrangement with which perhaps the latter was very well satisfied.

PLUTO had not any temples raised to his honour, but yearly sacrifices of black bulls were offered to him. He is very little spoken of by the ancients, who did not particularly wish to cultivate his acquaintance, or visit his territories.

They had an infinitely greater respect for a gentleman who in name very nearly resembled him; this was

PLUTUS,

the God of riches. He was supposed by our forefathers (who were not acquainted with the mysteries of commerce) to have been the offspring of CERES, or agriculture, and nursed by peace; whence, at Athens, Peace was represented holding in her lap the God of wealth. Our

modern speculating merchants, stock-jobbers, and contractors, however, have long discovered that war is a much better nurse of wealth than peace, and accordingly are infinitely better pleased with the former. They are also so far from considering CERES as the parent of opulence, that she is entirely neglected by their worships, who would rather bestow the honour upon VULCAN, the God of manufactures. For my own part, I should reconcile the difference, by making PLUTUS the offspring of *both* the deities above mentioned; though I must confess I should be old-fashioned enough to give the nursing of him to PAX, instead of BELLONA.

The Grecians very justly reckoned him a fickle deity, and feigned that he was a cripple, to show that he came to mortals with a slow and lingering pace; but they furnished him with a pair of wings, to intimate that he used infinitely more speed in his departure.

PLUTUS seems to have been a very general favourite with our ancestors: but if *they* worshipped him with fervency, *our* adoration of this useful deity is at least as warm;—

and if it was the fashion now to build temples to his honour, there would be only one obstacle to their being raised in infinite profusion, viz. the expence of erecting them!

LIBERTAS, OR LIBERTY,

the darling idol of Britons and of Romans, (both of whom, though accused of being somewhat tyrannical abroad, are known to have a great partiality to this Goddess at home) was represented as a female, holding in one hand a rod, in the other a cap, thence called the cap of liberty, and from which the French took their idea of the *bonnet rouge*. These symbols were placed in the hands of the Goddess, because, in manumitting or making free any slave, the magistrates touched them with the rod, and after they had recovered their liberty they always wore a particular kind of cap, which therefore very properly became the emblem of freedom.

"Oh Liberty, Heaven's choice prerogative!
"True bond of law, thou social soul of property!
"Thou breath of reason, life of life itself!
"For thee the valiant bleed.—Oh! sacred Liberty—
"Wing'd from the summer's snare, from flatt'ring ruin,
"Like the bold stork, you seek the wint'ry shore,
"Leave courts, and pomps, and palaces to slaves,
"Cleave to the cold, and rest upon the storm!"

GUSTAVUS VASA.

LUCINA

was a Goddess who had an undoubted title to the character of a gossip, on two accounts: —In the first place, she was always invited to, and in fact presided over, all lyings-in. —Secondly, like some other females, she was a terrible blab, and disclosed a vast many secrets, which the poor ladies would have been very glad to have kept concealed.— This shocking habit she has not yet got rid of, and every day some unfortunate damsel accuses LUCINA of having destroyed her reputation.

But enough of this good old lady.—The very idea of a gossip has caused such a tingling in my ears, and brought on such a violent

head-ach, that I must fly to my couch for a cure, where, however, I fear I shall dream only of the chattering of magpies, the clacking of a mill, or the ever-celebrated tower of Babel.

LETTER IX.

If the subject of my last epistle gave *me* the head-ach, I fear the contents of to-day's scrawl will give *you* the heart-ach; being principally filled with the history, character, and adventures of that charming damsel usually called

ATE, or DISCORD,

a deity to whom mankind in general have paid but too much adoration from the earliest ages. She was driven from heaven by Jupiter, in consequence of the eternal dissensions her ladyship had contrived to raise among the Gods. At the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, the Goddess of dis-

cord was excepted from the long list of divinities invited to grace the nuptials. To revenge this instance of disrespect, she threw into the midst of the assembly an apple inscribed "to the fairest." This was enough to set all the female part of the company by the ears. However, as modesty might be then more prevalent than it is now, the generality of the beauties present yielded the superiority to the three great Goddesses, JUNO, MINERVA, and VENUS; who each disputed the prize with such eagerness, and displayed such an equality of charms to entitle them to it, that the council of the Gods, well knowing what a dangerous and delicate task it was to arbitrate a question so important to the fair sex, and perfectly aware that eternal enmity to the judges might be reasonably expected from the two unsuccessful competitors, very wisely withdrew their heads out of the scrape, and proposed to refer the question to a mortal. Poor PARIS, the unknown son of PRIAM, then a shepherd on mount Ida, was the unlucky fellow pitched upon for this ticklish job.—The Goddesses repaired to him while tending his flock; and

as in the female breast even modesty itself is too often held as a trifle when the reputation of beauty is at stake, the fair competitors, fearful lest the influence of any of their charms should be lost on their judge, appeared before him as grand-mamma Eve first presented herself to the enamoured Adam. Poor PARIS was, as may be easily imagined, plaguily puzzled how to decide; and the fair-ones, who well knew the great effect of bribery upon the generality of judges, began to promise all kinds of gifts, with the profusion and art of thorough-paced courtiers. JUNO and MINERVA offered kingdoms and military glory, but they did not hit the right nail on the head. VENUS, who understood human nature better, touched the main spring in the bosom of a young man, by assuring him, that should the apple become hers, she would take care to give to his arms the most beauteous woman the earth had ever beheld. The best briber usually wins the cause, and the Paphian Queen was decreed to be "the fairest of the fair."

The natural consequence of the decision immediately followed;—PARIS and all his

race were persecuted to the last extremity by the rejected deities; and the long war which ensued between the Grecians and Trojans, and which ended in the destruction of the latter, gave ample vengeance and supreme delight to madam DISCORD, the author of all this mischief! This good-natured damsel has a pale and horrid look; her eyes sparkle with a dreadful and malignant fire; a dagger is seen concealed in her bosom, and her torn garments are stained with blood. She has also MEDUSA's elegant head-dress of snakes, who curl with an agreeable *non-chalance* round her pleasing countenance—a charming object of worship, it must be confessed! Yet even in this age she has very fervent adorers, particularly among our soldiers and lawyers, whose purses are generally very well filled, at the expence of their neighbours, by the assistance of the lady above described.

As I have mentioned the unlucky wight PARIS, I will just give you a sketch of his history. He was the son of PRIAM, king of Troy; and his mother having dreamed, some months before his birth, that she was deli-

vered of a firebrand, which consumed the palace, and the dream being explained by the soothsayers, who declared that the child she was pregnant of would cause the ruin of the state, the poor boy was ordered to be destroyed. The slave to whom the command was given spared the life of the helpless infant; but exposed it on mount Ida, where it was found and brought up by the shepherds. The early proofs he gave of intrepidity, in defending the flocks from wild beasts, occasioned him to be called *Alexander*, i. e. defender. He married the nymph ŒNONE, with whom he enjoyed for some time perfect felicity; but alas! men too soon fly from the pure pleasures of innocence, to pursue the guilty phantoms of licentious indulgence.—You have just heard of the promise VENUS made to him when he gave the famous decision, which procured him the name of PARIS, from the Celtic word *Par*, signifying a judge. This promise rested engraven on his mind, and too soon was it verified.

PRIAM having instituted a festival, at which his sons, grandees, and all strangers in general, were invited to try their strength

and skill at the martial games, and proposing to reward the victor with the finest bull that grazed on mount Ida, agents were dispatched in search of the animal.

The beast who surpassed the rest happened to make a part of PARIS's herd;—he, willing to regain his favourite, presented himself at the festival, and became victorious over every competitor. Even HECTOR, the pride of Troy, found the strength of PARIS irresistible.

The prince, enraged at defeat from an unknown and obscure rival, gave loose to the transports of indignation which filled his bosom; and PARIS would have fallen a victim to his fury, had he not taken shelter at the altar of JUPITER. Here he was met by the unfortunate and prophetic CASSANDRA, who, struck with the resemblance he bore to her brothers, made enquiries, which terminated in a full discovery of his relationship. He was received with open arms by all the family, who forgot the presages of the priests—presages which proved, however, but too well founded; for PARIS, soon recalling to mind that he was destined to possess a perfect beauty, fitted out a fleet on

pretence of recovering his sister HESIONE, whom HERCULES had carried off, but in reality to proceed to the court of MENELAUS, whose wife, HELENA, was allowed to be the most beautiful woman of the age.

Arrived there and hospitably received, he was but too successful in his dishonourable purpose;—HELEN consented to elope with him, and returning with her to Troy, he fancied himself perfectly happy in the arms of his companion; but a dreadful storm soon followed this deceitful calm.—MENELAUS roused all the princes of Greece to vengeance;—an immense army, conveyed by a numerous fleet, was landed on the Phrygian shores, and that terrible war commemorated by Homer commenced, which terminated but with the utter ruin of PRIAM's race and state.

During this war PARIS added nothing to his former fame; conscious guilt made him retire before the injured MENELAUS, with whom he afterwards fought, and to whose resentment he would have fallen a just sacrifice, had not VENUS carried him off in a thick cloud;—he, however, wounded some of the Grecians with his arrows,

one of which is supposed to have pierced ACHILLES in the heel (his only vulnerable part), and sent him to the realm of shades, to seek his friend PATROCLUS.

The death of PARIS is variously related. The general opinion seems to be, that one of the arrows of PHILOCTETES, formerly possessed by HERCULES, and dipped in the poison of the HYDRA, closed a life whose latter end tarnished the glory of his youth. Finding himself mortally wounded, he caused himself to be conveyed to the presence of the deserted ŒNONE, at whose feet he expired. The unhappy nymph, still devotedly attached to her worthless husband, wept over his lifeless body, and then, resolving no longer to endure an existence become hateful to her when deprived of her PARIS, stabbed herself to the heart, and fell upon his corpse, a sacrifice to constant love! —But let us return to the immortals.

THE FURIES

were three in number, namely ALECTO, TISIPHONE, and MEGARA: these damsels had the agreeable task of punishing the

sins of mankind, and executing upon the human race the vengeance of the Gods. Their figure and garments corresponded with their characters, being haggard, wild, and hideous, stained with blood and armed with whips. As fear is a very powerful passion in the breast of man, these adorable females were worshipped with the most profound awe and veneration, under the name of EUMENIDES; and JUPITER himself was treated with less respect than these terrible divinities.

Another female who may fairly rank with these pleasing ladies was

ENVY,

who was at least as much enraged at the felicity of mortals, as mesdames ALECTO, &c. were delighted with their torments. Like them, too, she had a pale and haggard countenance, lean body, squinting eyes, and snaky wig. Her only pleasure consists in destroying that happiness the sight of which gives her so much pain. Alas! though the worship of the trio above described is banished from the modern world, yet this detestable coadjutor of them has still

but too many votaries, whose bosoms are filled with her horrid poison!

Even in common conversation we often speak of the "thread of life."—The origin of this figure may not perhaps be known to you. It takes its rise from a mythological fable, that the

PARCÆ,

or Fates (three sisters, daughters of JUPITER) presided over the hours of our birth and of our decease. Two of them spun the thread of life, which work commenced the moment a mortal was born; the third, whose name was ATROPOS, separated what her companions had spun, and terminated the weary career of existence. Some great men, as they are called, i. e. conquerors, seem to envy ATROPOS her fatal office, and, fearful lest the thread of their fellow creatures should be too much extended, take upon themselves the task of dividing it.

THE MANES

I have certainly mentioned to you already, as being the spirits of deceased persons;

but I believe I never informed you that the Romans were infected with a folly to which the superstitious of the present day are much inclined, viz. that of imagining that some of these beings, worse disposed than the rest, delighted in tormenting and frightening mankind, much in the same way as our ghosts are supposed to amuse themselves in a country church-yard. These gentry they distinguished from the other manes, by the name of Lemures; and as some Indians worship the devil from fear, lest he should harm them—so, from the same motives, these sagacious conquerors of the world instituted certain rites and ceremonie in honour of their nocturnal visitors, which they called Lemuria.

All nations seem to have had their supernatural agents of an inferior degree, to whom they have assigned functions nearly similar to those of the Lemures.—Witness the Gnomes, the Dives, &c. &c. with which the traditions of every country are filled.

This is not to be wondered at;—human nature is ever inclined to superstition, which

is but one effect of that weakness inseparable from frail mortality.

Illustrious exceptions are, however, to be found from this general failing; nor can I ever forget it whilst I behold my dear *****, whose only weakness, if she possess any, is her partial friendship for the unlucky scribbler who now addresses her.—Ah! if it indeed renders her less perfect, long may it be ere she approaches nearer to perfection!

LETTER X.

Let me once more take up the pen, my dear sister, and continue the enumeration of the Roman deities, the catalogue of whom has, I fear, began to tire you. We will therefore pass over some of the inferior classes, and turn our attention to the interesting

ANTEROS,

who was the brother of Cupid, and like the passion over which he presided (mutual love) alas! but little known to mankind. According to the fictions of the poets, Venus, lamenting that her wicked little son remained always a child, was informed that he would rapidly increase, both in size and strength, when he should have a brother. Accordingly, when Anteros was born,

CUPID grew surprisingly; but whenever absent from his companion found himself reduced to his original dimensions.

This ingenious fable means simply that love increases only by being returned, and that no affection can subsist long with vigour which is not mutual; and alas! so ill assorted are the couples that now generally enter the temple of HYMEN, that although CUPID may *sometimes* enter with them, ANTEROS, I fear, scarcely ever accompanies him!

Among the other deities to whom the inhabitants of Rome paid religious honours, we must not omit to notice its celebrated founder,

ROMULUS,

who, according to their account, was the son of MARS and ILIA*, otherwise called

* That is to say, the damsel, who was one of VESTA's virgins, had granted her favours to some random lover; and to save herself from the punishment to which she was liable for her incontinence, she gave MARS the credit of being papa to her bantling. In this hope, however, she was disappointed; being buried alive, according to the horrid rule of the vestal order.

RHEA. ROMULUS had a twin brother, REMUS, with whom he was exposed by the order of their great uncle AMULIUS, the king of Alba, who had dethroned NUMITOR, their grandfather. According to the fabulists, they were miraculously preserved by a she-wolf, till FAUSTULUS, the king's shepherd, found them, and brought them up as his sons. (I shall inform you in another place who this she-wolf was, and how the fable arose.)

When they had arrived at years of maturity they discovered the secret of their birth, and restored their grandfather to his throne, after killing the usurper. The youths then wished to form a kingdom for themselves. They accordingly retired to the palatine Hill, where they began to erect a town; but a dispute arising as to the conducting of their future plans, it was agreed that he who was favoured by the Gods should be the ruler. To determine which the divinities declared for, they had recourse to the mode then in vogue of judging from the flights of birds.—They accordingly retired to separate spots, attended by their partisans, and in a short time REMUS saw

six vultures. ROMULUS, more fortunate, beheld twelve. The contest being thus decided, the works of the infant city began to go forward with alacrity; when REMUS, despising the low and slender walls which ROMULUS had erected, leaped over them in derision, and instantly fell a sacrifice to the savage fury of his ferocious brother.

ROMULUS, thus left sole possessor of his new town, wanted only one trifling thing to make him a monarch, viz. a few subjects. —These, it is true, he easily obtained, by receiving every refugee, vagabond, or robber that chose to follow his banners.—This respectable body, however, soon discovered that they were not immortal, and that it would therefore be requisite to devise some means of continuing their illustrious race. To this there existed a small obstacle, namely, that none of the neighbouring females were inclined to enter into the holy bands of wedlock with them. ROMULUS (who seems to have possessed some genius at getting rid of impediments) contrived to obviate this difficulty also, by giving public notice that he meant to

celebrate solemn games, in honour of a deity little known to modern statesmen, CONSUS, the God of councils.

As mankind are always provided with a sufficient portion of curiosity, great numbers of spectators assembled, particularly from the neighbouring country of the Sabines. Among these you need not doubt were abundance of ladies. This was all ROMULUS wanted. While every eye was fixed on the festival, a chosen band of Romans, well armed, rushed on the guests; and each tucking a damsel under one arm, away they trotted with their prizes.

This, you will say, was somewhat a violent mode of courting the fair-ones.—In consequence, therefore, of this "piece of a rape," as a Paddy would call it, the brothers and fathers of the ladies commenced a furious war against the Roman raggamuffins; and after many battles, the Sabines, getting into the new city, began cracking the pericraniums of the ravishers at a terrible rate —a compliment which they returned with interest. In the midst of this pretty bustle, the damsels who had been carried off, now

tolerably well reconciled by the hearty kisses of their rough husbands, rushed between the contending armies, and at length prevailed on both parties to make a treaty of peace.

In consequence of this amicable agreement, TATIUS, king of the Sabines, with most of his subjects, came and settled in Rome; the two monarchs sharing the regal power between them. TATIUS, however, died a few years after, not without some suspicion of unfair play from ROMULUS, who thus became possessed of the entire authority over both nations.

After ROMULUS had given his new kingdom some degree of stability—after he had increased his dominions by conquests, and divided the people into three classes, (the most respectable of whom were called Patricians, or senators, from their age, and the paternal authority given to them;)—in short, after having made several useful regulations, an eclipse of the sun happened, while he was consulting the body of senators on some point of importance, and from that day he was seen no more. It was

immediately reported, that he had ascended to heaven; an idea strenuously supported by the Patricians, one of whom declared that ROMULUS had appeared to him on the road from Alba, and commanded him to inform the Roman people that he was enrolled amongst the Gods, and would become the patron of the city, which should in future ages be the metropolis of the world.

Upon this information a temple was erected to him, under the name of QUIRINUS, in which a priest was maintained to pay him divine honours; and the flattery of his subjects was carried so far as even to include him among the twelve greater Gods,—and thus was the chief of a horde of banditti made the companion of the king of heaven!

The whole of this farce originated from the hatred which the senators bore to ROMULUS, with whose tyranny they began to be tired. They therefore thought the shortest way of getting rid of the matter was to slit his weazon, and then pretend he had taken a trip into the skies.—

The trick succeeded, and ROMULUS was a God!

We have forgotten one very serious though allegorical deity,

MORS, OR DEATH,

who was adored by the Romans with much solemnity.—Ah! to the virtuous he is indeed a friend—To the vicious, what spectre can glare with half his horrors?—

A tomb, says St. Pierre, is a monument built on the confines of both worlds!

From that solemn court of fate methinks I hear a voice address mankind, and warn them that

"The awful tomb no vain distinction knows!
"For all, alas! must feel the fatal blow.—
"The rich, the strong, the beauteous and the gay,
"Lost in one night, must wait eternal day!"

Pray have I ever introduced to your notice the

LARES, OR PENATES,

a species of inferior deities, who were supposed to preside over houses?

Their statues were placed in every mansion, generally in a niche behind the door, and like some of the inhabitants, perhaps, often bore a nearer resemblance to the monkey than the human figure. Sacrifices were offered to them at stated periods, as well as to the other divinities; and the figure of a dog barking was frequently placed at the feet of their images, to intimate their care and vigilance.

Their dominion was gradually extended to roads, ships, &c.; and it has been ingeniously suggested, that from the custom of placing the LARES on the left, and the figures of the sailor's patrons CASTOR and POLLUX on the right hand side of a ship, the modern terms *lar*board and *star*board, to signify left and right, took their rise: and really the etymology appears sufficiently probable.—With respect to the term *star*board, it may be necessary to observe, that a star always glittered on the heads of CASTOR and POLLUX, who might therefore be naturally called the *stars*.—As to the other term *(Lar)* it is evidently a very easy and almost *obvious* corruption of *Lares*.

Have I not in my little chats mentioned to you the Goddess of

VICTORY?

who by the bye was merely an allegorical divinity.—She was very fervently adored by the Romans, those eternal butchers.—As to us, we only become her devotees about half our lives, but during the time we address ourselves to her it is with an ardour almost equal to that of the conquerors of the world.

FAME,

the noisy fair-one, who makes such a terrible din, when she posts herself on a hill, and, clapping her trumpet to her mouth, exclaims like our newspaper boys, "great news! great news!" was a deity much respected among the Romans; one of whose principal reasons for going to loggerheads with all the world was, that they might employ the sounding trumpet of this stout-lunged damsel!

The idea of this same Goddess was most probably suggested to some poet by an antiquated maiden, who ran about the village, telling to every one all the news with which she was acquainted; and indeed this appears more probable, as these same gadding gossiping old damsels seem destined still to supply the place of the imaginary deity I have just been describing.—With us, the temples of Fame are generally the hair-dressers and chandlers shops; and the high priests are to be found in the venerable characters of snuff-taking old maids and puffing frizeurs, one of whom will dispatch the scandal of a whole hamlet in less time than he takes to make up a dozen curls!

With the

GRACES

my dear ***** is so perfectly acquainted, that I have nothing to observe, except that I most heartily wish the fair Goddesses had been but as liberal to me as they have been to my amiable friend.

These charming damsels have ever been

very great favourites with the fair sex, who seem to have placed them (if we may judge from their sedulous and successful worship) above the head even of JUPITER himself! Nor are our modern beauties less devout in this respect than their ancestors; and while all the rest of the tribe of heathen deities have disappeared, the Graces are in as high favour as ever!—Our fashionable belles of the present day, if they may not have successfully copied these nymphs in every particular, have at least adopted a mode of dress extremely similar to that used by the charming trio, which, I believe my fair friend, already knows is precisely the costume of our venerable great grandmother, madam Eve!

But I am almost tired with the immense number of divinities with which the ancients crowded every corner of the heavens, for in the rage for deifying they let nothing escape them.—Elements, (as earth, air, fire, water,) stars, clouds, meteors, vegetables, stones, metals; in fact, every object in the wide compass of nature, at one period or other, by some class of worshippers, was raised to

the heavens, and became an object of adoration. Many nations in particular adored stones, the Scythians iron, others silver and gold, and the Egyptians even leeks and onions. Were the present religions of Europe to be done away, I am persuaded several of these old superstitions would be revived. The miser would (as he does *now* indeed) imitate those who made deities of gold and silver. The soldier, like the Scythian, would worship iron. The lawyer might perhaps adore parchment;—the coquette rouge; and the alderman, improving on the insipid superstition of the Egyptian, would prefer venison and turtle as objects of adoration to either leeks or onions, which, if still permitted to hold a post in heaven, would only be placed there along with good toasted cheese, by my choleric countrymen, the Taffies.—Whiskey would infallibly be the divinity of the descendants of St. Patrick; —tobacco and grog those of a British tar: while the North Briton, snuffing up a handful of rappee, would think it at least as good an object of worship as any of the strange deities of his neighbours!

But mythological fables are not confined to the ancients, every nation of whom had, in fact, its own set of divinities. We find that, even at this day, the very negroes are deity makers, and under the title of FETICHES, claim (or at least exercise) the right of deifying almost any thing that their fancy may happen to fix upon, and of believing as many absurdities about their idols as their more civilised competitors, the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans could possibly do, with respect to their APIS, their JUPITER, or their QUIRINUS!

In general these imaginary guardians of the poor Africans are, I believe, little figures manufactured from a particular tree, thence perhaps called the Fetiche tree.

Adieu, dearest *****.—Were I inclined to make a Fetiche of any tree, it would certainly be from that whose branches had shaded beauty, innocence, and virtue!

LETTER XII.

My pages, dear *****, have for some time been engrossed by powerful yet worthless divinities. Let them for a moment celebrate obscure worth and humble virtue.

Among the few damsels who held the admiration of a deity as less valuable than the possession of conscious innocence, the nymph

SYRINX,

in particular, calls for our attention, on account of one remarkable circumstance, viz. that her name is still applied to a simple musical instrument (the shepherds reed), which is supposed to be one of the most ancient inventions of the human mind.

Syrinx, according to the fabulists, was an Arcadian nymph, of whom the sylvan deity Pan became enamoured; and as the gentleman was rather troublesome and violent in his conduct, the damsel implored the assistance of the Gods, and was changed

into a reed, of which her admirer made himself the pipe above described.

The pretty youth I have just mentioned, master

PAN,

was the son of PENELOPE, according to common report, and is represented as a perfect beauty, having a flat nose, ruddy complexion, and horns on his head; (where he got them I can't imagine, for he was never married). He had also the legs, tail, and feet of a goat. With all these charms, some people may not be surprised at the ladies running away from him. However, he must have certainly had great attractions for *sôme* tastes, as we find he was happy enough to captivate even the rigid DIANA.

He was the tutelary divinity of the country, and often amused himself by frightening the shepherds, pursuing the nymphs, &c. His name (which I shall again have occasion to mention) signifies *all*, and it is hence that it forms the first syllable of the word *Pantheon*, applied without much propriety to a building erected in Oxford-road,

which has no other claim to the title than a supposed resemblance to the Pantheon at Rome, which bore its name with more correctness, as being dedicated "to all the Gods"—*Pan*, all—*Theos*, God. There is also a Pantheon in France, which is now appropriated to the reception of the statues of celebrated men!

Having thus, my dear sister, given you a cursory account of a considerable part of the Roman mythology, I shall take the liberty of introducing to your notice a few divinities, who, though foreigners,* are entitled, by their rank and dignity, to precedence before the crowd of inferior characters whom I shall afterwards mention. One of the most noted among them is

APIS,

the God of the Egyptians, who was worshipped with great reverence, and treated with the most profound respect, under the form of an ox.—My dear sister, I have

* I had intended to have confined myself to the deities adored by the Romans, but on farther consideration thought it advisable to introduce a few illustrious strangers.

no doubt, will conclude, that the adorers of an ox must have certainly been *calves*.—Yet these people were the most civilised and enlightened of the age. In fact, like most of the ancient absurd idolatry, it arose from the mystical allegories of philosophers, who, perceiving the vast utility of oxen to mankind, and grateful to the Supreme Being for so valuable a gift, presented the patient and laborious animal to their countrymen, as an object of veneration and kindness; who, with the facility of vulgar minds, mistook the symbol for the reality, and instead of respecting the ox, as a proof of the goodness of God, adored him as the deity himself. Upon the same foundation do the Hindoos to the present day venerate the cow.—Both errors originating in sublime philosophy, and both degenerating into impiety by the weakness of mankind and the artifice of the priests, who, pretending to promulgate the will of the sacred bull, or cow, easily governed the grovelling multitude.

But to return to Apis, of whom you might perhaps wish to be acquainted with some further particulars.—

The ox, worshipped under this name, was always distinguished from others by the black colour of his body, a white spot on his right side, in the form of a semicircle, another square one on his forehead, and a third in the shape of an eagle on the back; all which marks the reverend gentleman who kept him had no doubt means of forming, in the same way that many modern jockies are able to change the colour and other distinguishing characteristics of a horse.

According to the sacred books of the Egyptians, the ox which represented Apis was permitted to live only a certain time; after which it was drowned in the Nile; and its body embalmed and buried in a solemn manner at Memphis. A general mourning was then observed, till a new Apis was found, when his re-appearance on earth * was celebrated with the most extravagant demonstrations of joy.

* We must remember that the Egyptians only imagined that Apis had condescended to appear in the shape of an ox, and did not consider the animal itself as a deity; in the same way as we believe that the soul of man is immortal, without attaching the same idea to his body.

When CAMBYSES conquered Egypt, he strenuously endeavoured to suppress the worship of APIS, chastising the priests, and wounding the supposed deity himself in the thigh. This monarch, it is said, died of an accidental injury which he received from his sword as he mounted his horse; and the Egyptian priests immediately seized on the occasion, to assert that the Gods had avenged themselves for the insult CAMBYSES had offered to APIS, by making the weapon with which he wounded the sacred ox the cause of his own death.

This horned deity had (like other Gods) his temples, oracles, and privileges: among the latter was the singular one of bestowing prudence, and the knowledge of future events, on those who smelt his breath—A most curious mode of acquiring sagacity! —Truly it is a pity we have not an APIS now, that some of our illustrious statesmen might place their dignified noses near his sacred mouth!

ISIS,

another very celebrated deity of the Egyptians, and of whose origin many puerile

accounts are given, by authors who did not understand the mythology of Egypt, was, in fact, an allegorical divinity intended to represent nature. Her priests were subjected to very rigid regulations, and passed the whole of the night in devotion near her statue; but what most claims our notice in the history of this deity is, the sublime inscription which often appeared on her images—"*I am all that has been, that shall be, and none among mortals has yet taken off my veil!*" This grand and beautiful sentence evidently intimates to every reader of judgment and good taste, that ISIS could mean only nature, the eternity and mysteriousness of whose operations are elegantly and concisely expressed in the inscription I have quoted.

The Egyptians, it must be observed, were extremely well acquainted with nature, and they generally veiled their ideas in allegories and symbols, some of which were perhaps the most beautiful that imagination could possibly form. Thus, according to historians, the inhabitants of Egypt believed, that the annual rising of the Nile was owing to the tears shed by ISIS, for the loss of OSIRIS.

This fable, when explained, proves, that the ancient Egyptians were acquainted with the real cause of those inundations which are so beneficial to their country; viz. the heavy rains which fall in the mountains of Abyssinia in consequence of the motion of the sun, who, leaving Egypt, draws vast quantities of clouds after him, which being intercepted by the hills of Ethiopia, descend in the condensed form of rain, and swell the majestic Nile (which it is well known takes its rise in Abyssinia) up to its very utmost limits. We shall perceive the peculiar beauty of the allegory above alluded to when we consider, that as Isis represented *nature*, so Osiris was intended as a personification of the *sun*.—The rain was therefore metaphorically "the tears which nature shed for the loss of the sun!"

To this instance might be added many others, all proving the intimate knowledge of nature possessed by the Egyptian sages, whose very writing (commonly called hieroglyphicks) was but a series of allusions to her delightful and eternally varied operations!

Among the hieroglyphical figures which

generally cover Egyptian monuments, we frequently see a human figure with the head of a dog, holding a wand in his hand.—

This is a representation of the God

ANUBIS,

whom some have supposed, from the caduceus which he bears, to be the same as HERMES or MERCURY,—a suggestion which bears the appearances of probability.

I should conceive that the dog's head is meant to represent the anxiety with which this deity was believed to watch over the welfare of mankind; that faithful animal being very generally adopted as an emblem of care and vigilance.

BELUS,

was one of the most ancient deities of the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Babylonians. He is supposed to have represented the sun, and to be the same character with the Egyptian OSIRIS.

According to the best authorities, the tower of Babel was converted into a tem-

ple for this divinity.—Very rich presents were made to it by various monarchs, by which means its wealth became immense, as may easily be conceived, when we learn that XERXES, who destroyed it in his expedition against Greece, found within its walls many statues of solid gold, the principal one of which was no less than forty feet in height—a rare prize! What a charming object of contemplation would such a temple be to some of our modern conquerors!

OROSMADES AND ARIMANIUS

were the two principles of good and evil, according to the mythology of the Persians.—The first created every thing beneficial, which the second constantly endeavours to destroy.—An unceasing contest is kept up between them; but the Persians believe that the former must ultimately prevail, and a decided defeat terminate the atrocious labours of ARIMANIUS.

Another illustrious stranger is the celebrated gothic deity—

ODIN,

the object of universal adoration among the ancient northern nations.

He was a Danish general, who flourished about 1900 years ago, and who made very extensive conquests, partly by the power of his arms, and partly by working on the superstition of his ignorant subjects; for, like Mahomet, he was at once a general, monarch, and priest. Finding old age approaching, he assembled his friends and followers, and having made nine different wounds on his body, in the form of a circle, with the point of his lance, he declared to those who surrounded him, that he was going to Scythia, where he should become one of the Gods, and that he would prepare in the mansions of bliss every felicity for those who should live virtuously, fight valiantly, and die in battle for their country!

He shortly after expired; and such was the effect of his arts, that for ages afterwards his countrymen considered him as their tutelary deity.

But evening closes in, and methinks I perceive the black steeds of night's chariot advancing slowly towards us. I must therefore bid you adieu for the present; though I can hardly reconcile it to my conscience to close my letter with so terrible and outré a character as the gothic divinity, lest you should dream of battles, armed chariots, and broken pericraniums. I must endeavour in my next to make amends for this rough deity, by landing you on some enchanted island or other—*where*, I must take advice of my pillow to determine.—Once more, adieu! May *your* pillow be ever strewed with roses, just emblems of your mild and modest virtues!

LETTER XII.

Let us now, my fair friend, leave the vast and gloomy halls of our gothic predecessors, as well as the sandy plains of superb Egypt, and once more return to the Roman fabulists, to notice a few personages often mentioned by poets, though of less importance than those before enumerated.

I believe I have spoken to you in our conversations of the enchantress

CIRCE,

whose adventures with Ulysses are very well known.—As you may wish for a more particular account of her ladyship, I must inform you that she was the daughter of the sun, and intimately acquainted with the properties of plants, the mysteries of magic, &c. It is said that she married a prince of Colchis; but that afterwards, liking the

kingdom better than the king, she sent him into the other world, in hopes, by this blow, to attain two very desirable ends, viz. to get rid of a husband, and to acquire a kingdom. In the latter point she was mistaken; for her subjects rebelled, and packed her out of the country. She then fled to Italy, and established herself in the island of Œæa, where she amused herself with turning people into pigs, bears, and other pretty beasts.

Her conduct towards Picus, whom she transformed into a woodpecker, because he liked his wife's physiognomy better than her's, and had taken into his head an old-fashioned whim of constancy, is well known: nor was her behaviour towards poor Scylla much better; which, however, I shall make you acquainted with hereafter.

The reception she gave Ulysses and his companions I shall relate to you elsewhere; I have therefore only this observation to make on her history, viz. that sensual pleasures are the real Circes, which, debasing the noble, the sublime spirit of human nature, reduces those who indulge in them to a resemblance of the brutes, and sometimes sinks them

even below their level!—Our passions also, when carried to an extreme, convert us into beasts. The fury of the angry man approximates him to the lion, the hypocrisy of the artful one makes him the resemblance of the treacherous hyæna, while the low and disgustful indulgence of unrestrained gluttony renders him inferior to a hog!—But the CIRCES who most effectually animalise the erring sons of men are the licentious part of your fascinating sex.—They, indeed, completely transform the man into the brute, and too often leave not even the desire of rising from that state of degradation to the proud pre-eminence of innocence.—Oh! how different was the original destination of woman!—Formed to be at once an incitement to virtue, its pattern, and reward!—Formed to smooth the rugged paths of life, to soften, to polish, and to elevate mankind!

THE SIRENS,

to whom authors so frequently allude, were sea-nymphs, who resided on the coasts of Sicily, and whose voices were so har-

monious, that the mortal who once heard their enchanting song forgot all occupations, pursuits, and duties, and, fixed in mute admiration, suffered himself to starve to death for want of food!

The oracle had declared, that the moment a man had passed them, without stopping to listen to their notes, they would inevitably perish. It fell to the lot of ULYSSES to fulfil this prophecy. When he passed by Sicily, he ordered his sailors (whose ears he stopped with wax) to tie him to the mast of the ship, and to disregard any signs he might make, should he wish to stop and listen to the song.—His orders were obeyed; and notwithstanding the irresistible harmony of the Sirens occasioned him to make vehement endeavours to get loose, his previous precaution saved him.—His crew, who could not hear the destructive music, paid no attention to his gestures, and the vessel passed in safety. The Sirens, disappointed and enraged, threw themselves into the ocean, and expired

If the ancients had their Sirens, we also have ours, equally pernicious to mankind—Sirens who not only rob us of existence, but

of health, fortune, and too often even honour. I need not add, they are to be found among that unhappy description of females who have abandoned the charms of virtue, to reign by those of illicit pleasure.—One class of these bear a particular resemblance to the ancient Sirens, from their almost equalling them in their musical powers.—These destructive fair-ones are distinguished among mortals by the name of opera singers, and are too often found by our youthful nobility to be at least as dangerous as the tempters of ULYSSES.

Let us add, moreover, that our own passions but too often prove the Sirens who lure us to destruction.—Where is the man that has not at some period heard the Siren voice of ambition, of avarice, or glory?—And alas! who is there that has never believed, while he listened to their delusive promises?

As to the

GORGONS,

one of whom PERSEUS destroyed (mademoiselle MEDUSA), they were represented as having locks composed of snakes (a tasty

head-dress, it must be allowed); and with such enchanting phizzes, that the very sight of one of them turned the beholder into stone—(Pretty objects of contemplation, to be sure!)—Now it has just struck me, that these same petrifying damsels were neither more nor less than three tremendous old maids; a suggestion which is the more probable, as two of them were supposed to be immortal, and you know the moderns say that, like their favourite grimalkins, these antiquated virgins have nine lives instead of one!

Among the other beauties of the ancient mythology, I must not omit to notice with due respect

MONSIEUR POLYPHEMUS,

a gentleman who was in no danger of spoiling his attractions, by acquiring the disagreeable habit of squinting, or looking two ways at once, as JUPITER had been pleased to assign him only one eye, which, however, was very advantageously and ornamentally

situated in the middle of his forehead.—This elegant youth was not like our modern puny Bond-street loungers, of hardly five feet high: his stature was measured by fathoms, not feet; and from all accounts, one of Swift's brobdygnags would have been scarcely sufficiently tall for his page. This Adonis, like other pretty fellows, took it into his head to be in love.—He courted the nymph GALATEA; but after having made proposals in due form, setting forth his royal blood (for he was king of the Cyclops, a race of beauties like himself, who assisted VULCAN in his labours at Mount Etna), and expatiating on his wealth, power, charms, &c. he had the vexation to find that the lady preferred a less gigantic admirer, in the person of the shepherd ACIS. He therefore took an opportunity when the lovers little expected him, and whipping up a rock (an ugly trick he was much addicted to), hurled it at the poor boy, and crushed him to pieces. This same gentleman had a singular love for mankind, but unluckily it was the same kind of love that an alderman has for a venison pasty.—He used to

eat up all strangers who alighted on his coast.—ULYSSES, returning from the Trojan war, had like to have proved a *bon bouche* for the one-eyed gentleman.—POLYPHEMUS made a comfortable meal every day on two of his companions; but the Grecian prince, who, like me, had rather a dislike to this mode of quitting the world, took an opportunity while he slept of poking out his eye, and next morning escaped to his ship.—The giant, wandering on the sea-coast, heard the dashing of the oars; and ULYSSES, who here, I think, wanted his usual prudence, loudly taunted him, working his giantship up to such a pitch of rage, that he dispatched a rock after him, intending to treat him *a la mode d'Acis*:—he luckily missed the ship, and ULYSSES, after a second pelting, got beyond the reach of his arm. Had I been the Grecian, I should have been less noisy. I hate these gentry, who make no more of throwing a mountain at you than we would of tossing up a China orange.—They are very ugly playfellows.

Have I not, my dear *****, mentioned to you the

AMAZONS*,

a nation of fair ones, who went to war, fought desperately, cut off their right breast, that they might draw the bow with more ease, and would not suffer any man to enter their dominions. In good truth, had I lived in those ages, I should never have been in any danger of attempting it.—These pate-cracking, throat-cutting damsels are no great favourites of mine; and if I *had* felt any violent inclination, it would probably have been to have got as fast as possible out of their way.

But surely this unconscionable long scrawl must have inclined you by this time to yield to the influence of one of the divinities of Rome, whom I think I have not hitherto mentioned, viz.

* There existed formerly in America a race of females, whose character and habits were supposed to bear so near a resemblance to those of the ancient Amazons, that they were distinguished by the same appellation, and one of the largest rivers of that noble continent, named after them, retains to this hour the name of the River Amazon.

SOMNUS*,

or the God of Sleep, to whose care I will therefore recommend you; only hoping that your dreams may not consist of interviews with either CIRCE, the SIRENS, POLYPHEMUS, or the GORGONS.—Rather may they be under the direction of the Graces, the Loves, and the Muses. Adieu, dear *****, and pardon the prolixity of one who is ever most sincerely and devotedly

Yours, &c.

* SOMNUS holds his court in a dark cave, the entrance of which is surrounded by innumerable poppies.—In the deepest recesses of this silent and gloomy retreat, the divinity of sleep reclines on a bed of down, with black curtains. His ministers, the dreams, MORPHEUS, &c. watch in profound silence around the couch.

LETTER XIII.

HAVING nearly exhausted the first-rate characters of mythology, and I presume my saucy friend will add, her patience along with it, I shall only enumerate some personages who have hitherto escaped our notice, and then conclude my observations on this interesting branch of literature, by a few miscellaneous paragraphs on subjects in some degree connected with it.

To begin then with

NIOBE:

This was a lady who had the misfortune to be changed into a statue, while lamenting the death of her children, whom APOLLO and DIANA had killed to punish their mother's pride, in preferring herself * to LATONA,

* On account of her numerous issue.

the mother of the two deities last mentioned.

CASTOR AND POLLUX

were twin brothers, sons of LEDA; one of whom, claiming JUPITER for his father, was immortal; while the other, being the offspring of TYNDARUS, was subjected to the common fate of mankind.

They were supposed to be the patrons of sailors, from two circumstances.—The first, their clearing the Hellespont from pirates—the other, that being in a terrible tempest during the Argonautic expedition, two lambent flames suddenly appeared round the heads of the brothers, and soon after the winds lulled, and the sea recovered its serenity.—These meteors are very common at sea, and attach themselves to different objects, as the masts or bow-sprit of the ship, &c. From their having taken a fancy, however, to these two heroes, they are frequently called CASTOR and POLLUX; and the sailors, who have been always distinguished for superstition, used to fancy that the appearance of one only was ominous,

as foreboding bad weather, while they imagined that if two were seen all would go well.

The mortal brother (CASTOR) was at length killed in a quarrel; and POLLUX, inconsolable for his loss, implored JUPITER either to restore his brother to life, or deprive him of his immortality. The father of the Gods, however, only allowed him to divide his privilege with CASTOR; and accordingly one passed half the year in heaven, while the other remained with PLUTO.—At the expiration of the six months, the under-ground man came up to get a mouth-full of fresh air, and was relieved by his heavenly partner.—They thus kept watch and watch, as the tars term it; and JOVE at length, delighted with their fraternal affection, clapped them up in a snug corner of the skies, where they form the constellation of GEMINI, or the twins, the principal stars of which are said to appear and disappear alternately.

The Romans were extremely fond of these heroes, and used frequently to report that they had appeared at the head of the armies, leading the charge with great fury—a report

which tended to inspirit the soldiery.—They were generally represented as youths seated on white horses, and armed with spears, with a star sparkling on each of their heads. From this last circumstance arose, as it is supposed, the terms of *star*-board and *lar*-board, which you will find farther explained in another part of these pages.

Poor

ECHO!

unfortunate victim of two very natural passions in a female breast—the love of talking, and the still more enchanting love of a handsome young man!

This hapless damsel often met JUNO in search of her inconstant spousy; and as the nymph knew it was ten to one that some of her female companions were amusing him in a very agreeable manner, and she had a vast dislike to seeing good company disturbed, she always took special care to engage the jealous Goddess in an immense long gossip, which gave her naughty partner an opportunity of making his escape, and saving the reputation of his companion.—

JUNO, however, at length discovered the trick; and thinking the severest revenge she could inflict on a lady would be to check her incessant loquacity, she immediately deprived poor ECHO of the power of speaking any thing except the last words of another.—Alas! were modern females to be as severely treated as this poor girl, for their attachment to gossiping, what a number of enchanting little tongues would be reduced to silence, who now chatter with such infinite grace about ten thousand important nothings!

But alas! poor ECHO's misfortunes did not terminate here. She consoled herself as well as she could for her hard fate, by answering every one who spoke in their own words;—a small consolation, it is true, but still better than total silence.—As she rambled one day in the woods, she saw the beautiful NARCISSUS, whose elegant form immediately captivated her. Robbed as she was of the power of expressing her sentiments, yet she contrived, with the natural ingenuity of a woman, to make him acquainted with his conquest, even by the repetition of his own exclamations. The youth,

insensible to love, fled from the poor damsel; who, ashamed of her repulse, yet consumed by unutterable wishes, retired to hide her blushes and her tears in the deepest recesses of the woods. Here, agitated with confusion, anguish, despair, and affection, she pined in hopeless agony away:—each hour she grew more pale and emaciated, and every sun that rose perceived a beauty less, till at length the torture of her soul left her only a mind and a voice—her form had withered into air. She hovers invisible amidst the groves, and still soothes the sorrows of despairing love, by repeating the complaints of lovers.

The haughtiness of NARCISSUS, which caused this melancholy catastrophe, did not long go unpunished. Other nymphs experienced his coldness, and implored the Gods that the cruel shepherd might feel the pangs he caused, and like them wither with a vain passion.—Their prayers were heard; for NARCISSUS, going to quench his thirst at a lucid fountain, saw his own image in the stream, and, taking it for a nymph of the waves, became desperately enamoured of the beauteous shadow.—In vain he en-

deavoured to fold it in his arms, to kiss its ruddy lips.—Vexation and regret fix themselves in his heart, and he too, for ever gazing on the loved, unreal image, pines away to nothing. The deities in pity changed him into a flower, which still bears his name.

We may learn one thing from this fable, viz. that when the fair-sex pursue, the men inevitably fly!—Had poor ECHO recollected this, she had not, perhaps, been reduced to an immaterial sound!

As to NARCISSUS, his fate is by no means singular: thousands have been as much enchanted with their own sweet faces, without equal cause; and our modern Bond-street bucks convince the fair-sex every day, that, like him, they perfectly disregard the charms of all woman-kind, to fix their admiration on themselves. It is a pity their affection does not carry them quite so far as it did NARCISSUS; for if they could but dwindle with self-admiration into roses, violets, or jessamin, our flowers would be almost too numerous to be reckoned, and the presence of these sweet fellows in our gardens would

be the most agreeable thing in nature, except—their absence from our society!

But it is not our gardens only that are stocked with metamorphoses, our forests too are filled with them:—witness

APULUS,

a rude clown, who once finding a company of nymphs amusing themselves very innocently and agreeably in dancing under the verdant shade, insulted them by mimicking their steps, and adding to insolent language the most immodest gestures. His capering, however, was soon stopped; his feet suddenly adhered to the earth, strong roots spread from his toes, and struck deep into the ground; his arms, now agitated by the wind, cast on every side a number of small branches, covered with dark leaves; and the brutal clown became a wild olive tree, the emblem of savage rusticity.

Were this fate to befal all who shewed themselves unworthy of being ranked among men, by their ill treatment of the women, I

think it would be a most just and admirable punishment, and would tend greatly to the benefit of his majesty's navy, by vastly increasing the stock of our timber.

We should not, I fear, find our principal recruits of wood to arise where they might be naturally expected, viz. among those we proverbially call clowns; vast numbers of sticks (as the technical term is) would be taken from our highest circles. The court-end of the town would be terribly thinned, and Westminster might perhaps bear a near resemblance to Epping forest!—What would be the surprise of a company of fashionables, if a sprig of nobility turning aside the flaps of his coat, and placing his back to the fire, to the exclusion of half a dozen females, should suddenly harden into a beech tree; or a captain of the guards, sitting down at supper in a chair reserved for a blooming beauty of eighteen, should find his pumps coalesce with his feet, his pretty person rapidly covering itself (instead of regimentals) with bark, and himself transformed from a dashing officer into an ash or an oak tree!

But to quit the woods, and return to the warm circle of social life—

Near that farm door you may perceive a stately cock crowing very loudly, and stalking majestically along. This is a descendant of

ALECTRYON,

a poor youth, whom MARS had set to keep watch, while he was gallanting with madam VENUS. The lad fell asleep, and APOLLO discovered the lovers together, and exposed them to the derision of the other Gods.—MARS, enraged, changed ALECTRYON into a cock, who, as the poets say, still remembering his transformation, always gives notice of the approach of APOLLO, or the sun, by his loud crowing.

Apropos!—I must make interest with master ALECTRYON, to be waked early to-morrow; and lest I should be too fast in the chains of MORPHEUS to hear his voice, I think it will be advisable to adjourn to the

couch of Somnus pretty early.—Excuse, therefore, the shortness of this scrawl, and believe me most sincerely and devotedly

Your's, &c.

LETTER XIV.

Among all the curious metamorphoses in fabulous history, none perhaps is more singular than that of

IPHIS,

daughter of Telethusa, a woman of Crete. Her husband Lygdus, who was extremely poor, had ordered, that should the child she was pregnant of prove a girl, it should be put to death; a command which the distressed mother might perhaps have obeyed, but for the interference of the Goddess Isis, who, appearing to her in a dream, enjoined her to preserve the infant she should produce, of whatever sex it might be.—The child was a female, but was put out to nurse as a boy; a deception with which the father remained unacquainted, till Iphis arrived at maturity, when Lyg-

DUS determined to unite his supposed son to a female of the name of IANTHE. TELETHUSA in despair invoked the Goddess ISIS: the divinity, who felt for her distress, changed the sex of IPHIS, who was thus converted into a dashing young beau, and received with delight the hand of his IANTHE!

Truly it is a pity these transformations do not take place now: if we could but get a few thousands of stout hardy country wenches turned into grenadiers or dragoons, it would be a mighty assistance to our military force; while the loss on the side of the fair-sex might be repaired, by turning into women two or three myriads of men milliners.—Half a dozen of our statesmen too would make capital old women, and might be very innocently employed in manufacturing of lace, or mending of stockings.

The story of ANAXERETE ought to be a warning to all damsels, not to treat their lovers with too great severity. This lady was beloved by the unfortunate IPHIS*, who finding himself despised by the object

* Not the Iphis just mentioned.

of his affection, became unable to sustain the burthen of an existence he hated; so, fitting a cord of moderate strength to his neck, he suspended himself from the door-posts of his beloved, and thus put an end to his troubles!

The cruel fair-one did not go unpunished; for as the funeral of her ill-fated lover passed by her house, she went to look out of the window to behold the procession, when her limbs suddenly stiffened, every joint refused to bend, and she gradually became a statue, or (as Ovid elegantly expressed it) the stone which had so long lurked in her breast by degrees spread over her whole form.

I was going to breathe out a fervent wish, that this terrible fate might never befal any modern beauty, when I recollected that in these times there is but little danger of such an event, most of our belles at present being at least *sufficiently* yielding.

As we are on the subject of transformations, do not let me forget that of master

BATTUS,

who got changed into a touchstone in a curious way. MERCURY, the God

of thieves, liking now and then to practise the art he patronised, contrived one day to steal away from a large herd some very fine cattle, which he concealed in the woods. BATTUS, who kept the flocks of a rich man in that neighbourhood, saw the God; and MERCURY, to induce him to be silent, promised him, that if he denied having seen the cattle, he should have one of them for his pains:—suspecting, however, that he could not depend upon his fidelity, he soon returned in a different form, and enquiring after the cattle, promised him a bull and cow if he would inform him where they were concealed.—The fellow, thinking, like many others, that a double fee was better than a single one, disclosed the secret, and found himself instantaneously converted into a touchstone, which still retains something of his nature, receiving willingly every new touch of gold!

I fear, was this kind of metamorphosis in fashion now-a-days our very streets would be paved with touchstones.—Thank Heaven, the population of the state stands in no danger of receiving such a shock.

We have found victims to the vengeance

of the divinities among our flowers, our trees, our birds, and even our stones: let us now turn our attention to the animals; —and behold, the first we cast our eyes on, that fierce-looking beast, whose skin is spotted like a leopard, whose eyes sparkle with a vivid and malignant fire, and whose ears, shaped like those of a cat, have a long pencil of fine black hairs growing from the tips.

This ferocious animal was formerly

LYNCUS OR LYNCÆUS,

a monarch of Scythia, or according to some authors a king of Sicily, who received at his court TRIPTOLEMUS, the favourite of CERES, who was travelling over the world to instruct mankind in the blessings of agriculture. The prince, meanly jealous of his inmate, attempted to assassinate him while he slept; but was suddenly transformed, as he raised the deadly weapon on his guest, into the beast I have just described, who has preserved his name with little alteration, and is now called the LYNX!

Though I have given (upon the authority of the general body of writers) the credit of this act of perfidy, and its consequence to the Scythian prince, yet if we consider the supposed sharpness of sight attributed to the Lynx, we shall be perhaps inclined to think that the hero LYNCÆUS was more likely to have been thus metamorphosed. He was the son of APHAREUS, and one of the hunters of the Caledonian boar. His sight was supposed to be so exquisite, that he could distinguish objects at nine miles distance, and even see into the earth.

This hero is not singular in his optical powers; they are equalled, and even surpassed, every day, by the hawk's eyes of a jealous lover, of a merchant who is spying out a bargain, by those of a prude watching the failings of her female neighbours, of a well-fee'd lawyer perusing the pleadings of his adversary, of a courtier who is on the look-out for the errors of his rival, and by the imperial optics of the ermined monarch, whose rapid glance quickly discovers, amidst the territories of a weaker neighbour, some convenient province to which he has a

well-founded title, in right of his great, great, great, great, grand-father, who conquered the said district 300 years before!

The very rivers and lakes are fruitful of mythological anecdote:—witness the history of

MANTO,

the prophetess, daughter of TERESIAS, which is something singular; permit me, therefore, to give you a sketch of it.—This fair-one was taken in THEBES, her native city, by the ARGIVES, and being considered the most valuable acquisition the besiegers had made by their conquest, she was presented to the God APOLLO, and conveyed to the temple of DELPHOS, to act as priestess to that divinity. After having delivered the oracles of APOLLO for some time, she removed to IONIA, and married the king RHADIUS.—She afterwards entered a second time into the holy state of matrimony in Italy, with the king of ALBA, TIBERINUS, by whom she had OCNUS, who built the

town of *Mantua**, celebrated by its having been the birth place of Virgil. She is said to have wept herself into a lake, from grief at the misfortunes of her native country.—This must have been a patriotic damsel!—We seldom hear of such melting sorrow now-a-days!

ATLAS,

I have no doubt, you have often heard of, as being a gentleman of gigantic stature, who had the easy task imposed upon him of supporting the whole weight of the heavens on his unlucky shoulders. This pretty employment at length fagged him a little, and he was very glad to get Hercules to take a lift for a short time, while he rubbed his hands and shrugged his shoulders. It was a lucky thing for the hero, that his friend did not leave him in the lurch, or he might have found a tight job of it, to have borne up all the stars, &c. on his broad back.—However, fortunately for him, Dan Atlas took his post again; where he has, it

* From his mother's name, Manto.

seems, continued ever since, for I don't hear of any body else ever taking a spell to rest him.—I should think by this time his shoulders must ache amazingly.

Other accounts, however, state that Mr. Atlas was turned into a rock by the conqueror of the Gorgons, the celebrated and terrible PERSEUS.

The mountain which goes by his name crosses the deserts of Africa, in a direction nearly from east to west, and is of stupendous height, its summit reaching to the very clouds; whence may have arisen the fables of ATLAS supporting the weight of the heavens!

Support the heavens!—What a fatiguing idea!—The very thought is sufficient to make one shoulders ache!—As I don't feel at all inclined, therefore, to relieve Dan Atlas of his burthen, I shall even leave him to make the best of it; and as, by the bye, I think I pretty nearly resemble him (for if he bore the heavens on his shoulders, I have had for some days all their inhabitants in my brains), I conceive myself as much in want of rest as himself, and shall therefore

drop my pen and mythology together, and only add to this scribble an assurance, which I trust you will readily credit, that I am with the utmost sincerity, &c. &c.

LETTER XV.

Let me, my amiable friend, introduce to you a celebrated character, to whom the world is much indebted, viz.

CADMUS,

an unfortunate hero of antiquity, whose sister Europa was carried off by Jupiter in the shape of a bull, as I believe I have informed you in another place. Poor Cadmus was commanded by his father (Agenor, king of Phœnicia) to go in search of his sister, and never return without her. Finding all his endeavours to discover her fruitless, he consulted the oracle of Apollo, and was ordered to settle in the spot where he should see a young heifer stop in the grass.—In this place he was instructed to build a city, and call the country *Bæotia* (from *bove*, a cow).—Accordingly Cadmus

found the young heifer, and prepared to obey the oracle; but having sent his companions to procure water at a fountain, they were all devoured by a dragon who guarded it.—Alarmed at their not returning, he went to the fountain, and revenged the death of his companions by killing the dragon, with the assistance of MINERVA, who took pity upon him, and instructed him to bury the teeth of the monster in the ground; the consequences of which step she revealed to him, as well as the conduct he should pursue. Accordingly the teeth were sown, and instantly a number of armed men sprang from the ground, and attacked him. He, pre-instructed by MINERVA, threw a stone amongst them, and their rage was instantly turned against each other. After a severe conflict, five only remained alive, who assisted CADMUS in building his city*. After

* I recollect some time since reading some very pretty and spirited lines addressed to a lady, which I will take the liberty to insert:—

"When CADMUS sowed the dragon's teeth,
"A race in war delighting
"Sprung from the teeming earth beneath,
"And shortly fell to fighting!

this event he married HERMIONE, the daughter of VENUS, by whom he had a son, POLYDORUS, and four daughters, SEMELE, AGAVE, INO, and ANTONOE. JUNO's unrelenting hatred persecuted all these children; and their parents, worn down by age and misfortunes, implored the assistance of the Gods, and were changed into serpents.

CADMUS introduced into Greece many Phœnician and Egyptian customs, religious rites, and even the alphabet, of which some persons suppose him to be the inventor.

On the whole, he seems to have been very unfortunate, and apparently less deserved it than his cotemporary heroes.

The history of

PROMETHEUS

is particularly well known, and has afforded allusions and illustrations to innumerable writers.

> " But when thy beauteous teeth were sown,
> " Thy lips there dwelt such bliss in,
> " Young loves and graces rose alone,
> " And quickly fell to kissing!"

This singular personage, (in whose story, by the bye, are to be found a thousand contradictions), was the son of JAPETUS, and supposed to be the most artful of mortals. A variety of useful inventions are also ascribed to him. He is said to have taught men the art of taming animals, particularly horses, and of using them in war, commerce, and agriculture. He was not, however, very respectful in his conduct towards the Gods; and even made a jest of JUPITER himself, by killing two oxen, whom he afterwards flayed, and separating the flesh from the bones, inclosed the meat in one skin, the bones and offal in the other.—He then offered the divinity his choice of either as a sacrifice. The monarch of OLYMPUS, unconscious of the pretty trick master PROMETHEUS had played, chose the hide which contained the bones. The discovery of this artifice was the cause of the priests ever afterwards burning the victims whole. This was not the only proof of art given by this adroit gentleman; for JUPITER having, as a punishment to mortals, deprived them of the element of fire, PROMETHEUS (with MINERVA's aid)

got up into heaven, and having lighted a torch at the chariot of the sun, descended again in safety. This completed the measure of JUPITER's wrath, who ordered one of the Gods to chain this daring mortal to Mount Caucasus, where he was destined to become the prey of a ravenous vulture, who lived upon his liver, which grew as fast as it was devoured.—This was to last for 30,000 years, but HERCULES abridged the term by three cyphers; for happening to pass near the mountain about thirty years after the commencement of this punishment, the hero dispatched master Vulture, and set the poor prisoner at liberty.

PROMETHEUS is generally supposed to have been so eminently endowed with the gift of prophecying, as to be consulted even by the Gods, without excepting JUPITER himself. That he had *forethought* at least is extremely evident, from the reception he gave to PANDORA.—But the act which of all others has given him the fairest title to immortality is, his forming the first man and wo-

man, of clay, and giving them life by means of the celestial fire, which he brought from the chariot of the sun. This, by the bye, is an evident and absurd contradiction; for the very poets who give us this fable, talk of the men existing at the same time with, and even prior to, the birth of PROMETHEUS. The meaning of this piece of mythological tradition is therefore supposed to be simply this—that being an excellent artist in clay, he made statues of men and women, which from their admirable workmanship appeared to be alive. A still more refined explanation has been given by the translator of Ovid, viz. that PROMETHEUS was the first great civiliser of mankind, whose barbarous manners he softened, polished, and improved. In this sense we have ourselves to boast of a PROMETHEUS in the illustrious ALFRED, who, in reforming the religion, restoring the laws, increasing the military and naval force, improving the administration of civil and criminal justice, correcting the morals and polishing the manners of his subjects, by the

introduction of arts, sciences, and literature, may have been said to have created anew his earthern clods, and to have shaped them into men!

In later days, PETER (deservedly, perhaps, styled the *Great*) followed the noble example of our ALFRED, and leaving a throne, which he little valued while supported only by barbarians, drew from Europe the arts and knowledge of each polished clime; and after having created a navy and an army, after having formed his uncouth slaves into soldiers, sailors, merchants, manufacturers, and subjects, raised his empire into a state of the first consequence among nations, to whom before his reign its very existence was almost unknown.

THE CHIMERA

was supposed to be a hideous monster, the offspring of TYPHON and ECHIDNA, who had three heads, resembling those of a goat, a lion, and a dragon, all of which vomited forth flames. BELLEROPHON, mounted upon PEGASUS, encountered and destroyed

it*. This is supposed by some authors to mean, that the hero above mentioned cultivated a desert mountain in Lycia, whose top was the crater of a volcano, and was inhabited by lions, its centre by goats, and the damp and marshy ground near the bottom by serpents and other venemous reptiles. Others suppose, that the CHIMERA was the ship of a band of pirates, who had ornamented it with the figures of the animals I have just mentioned. Be that as it will, the CHIMERA, even in the earliest ages, was so generally allowed to be fabulous, that the poets soon began to use the word *Chimera* to signify any apprehended evil, which was really without foundation, in which sense it is used to this day.—From representing illusions of *terror*, it came to be employed as a symbol of flattering and delusive hope;

* The probable meaning of the fable is obviously this: that BELLEROPHON conquered and reformed a people, whose savage manners were a disgusting mixture of the ferocity of the lion, licentiousness of the goat, and art of the serpent. His being assisted by PEGASUS, in his engagement with the Chimera, signifies, that he called to his aid the arts and sciences, literature, and poetry, to soften and purify the manners of the vanquished barbarians.

thus we hear of the chimeras of ambition, which fill the mind of a statesman, or those of avarice, which occupy the very soul of a miser; of the chimeras of fame, with which the poet so often solaces his solitary hours, or those of conquest, in pursuit of which the monarch wades through seas of blood. Even philosophers have their chimeras; witness the discovery of the longitude, the quadrature of the circle, the perpetual motion, and of old the philosopher's stone! By some dull, plodding, coldly-calculating worldly-wise greybeards, friendship, love, and even honour, are ranked among the chimeras. Alas! to those who thus reason, happiness is already a chimera! Virtue will soon become one also!

For my own part, I love to indulge even in illusions, if they are innocent—a thousand pleasing ones now crowd upon my mind. To enjoy them without interruption, I shall take a solitary and contemplative walk; and therefore must bid you adieu for the evening.

LETTER XVI.

LET me, my dear friend, once more recall your attention to the fables of the poets, from whom I hope yet to gather for you a few hours of entertainment.

Among the rest of their wild but amusing tales, you must certainly in the course of your reading, my amiable pupil, have often met with allusions to

THE HARPIES,

a kind of pretty singing birds, with human heads, who had the agreeable faculty of devouring whatever fell in their way, and of totally spoiling whatever they touched. This fable, I conceive, must have been intended to represent either lawyers, soldiers, or tax-gatherers: the majority of mankind, I fancy, will give their votes in favour of the latter; and, I believe, most people would as soon be plagued with the Harpies themselves as with these their representatives.

Another enchanting creature, in the ages of fable, was madam

SPHINX,

a lady whose pleasing person was made up of various parts, all bearing a resemblance to some animal or other; thus she had the body of a dog, the wings of a bird, paws of a lion, and tail of a serpent. The only parts human about her were the head and neck.

This fair-one infested the neighbourhood of Thebes, proposing enigmas to the inhabitants, which they (being rather thick-headed) could not unriddle; upon which she, in order to brighten their genius, took rather a singular, and, as it would have proved to me, somewhat an unpleasant mode. This was no other than to snap up some of the Thebans, and make a very hearty meal of them. Instead of sharpening their wits, this seemed to frighten away what they had; till, in the midst of their consternation, the oracle announced that the Sphinx would destroy herself, if any of her riddles were explained. This was soon

verified by ŒDIPUS, who being desired to declare what animal it was, who walked in the morning on four legs, at noon on two, and in the evening on three, readily replied, that man, at his birth (the morning of life) crawled on all-fours; when arrived at maturity, walked erect on two; but in old age was obliged to have recourse to the assistance of a stick, which might be said to be a third. The lady (vexed, like some other wits, to find herself equalled) dashed her head against a rock, and by her death delivered Thebes from its terrors*.

As I am on the subject of beauties, I may as well mention poor

SCYLLA,

who was once a pretty damsel; but having refused the offers of a sea deity named GLAUCUS, he applied to CIRCE, the enchantress, in hopes of rendering his fair-one propitious,

* The SPHINX was generally considered as an emblem of the mysteries of religion, and was therefore placed by the Egyptians at the entrance of their temples.

through the magic of his female acquaintance. She unluckily fell in love with him herself, and, to get rid of her rival, poured poisonous herbs (over which she had repeated her dire incantations), into the water in which the nymph bathed. The unlucky girl no sooner jumped into the fatal stream than she found herself transformed into a monster, or rather collection of monsters: she had six heads, with treble rows of teeth; her two little feet were multiplied to a dozen; and her waist was surrounded with dogs, who barked incessantly. The unhappy damsel, frightened at the transformation, threw herself into the sea, and was changed into a rock, near the coast of Sicily, where she had for a neighbour the dreaded whirlpool of Charybdis. They lay so near together that it was thought difficult to avoid the one, without falling in with the other. Hence arose the common proverb, "that in escaping Charybdis we perish by "Scylla," to show that in our eagerness to avoid one evil we often meet with a worse.

I have no doubt you have heard that ROMULUS, the first prince of that illustrious band of robbers, the Romans, was nursed

by a she-wolf. This curious fable, like that of Hannibal working his way through the Alps with vinegar, arises merely from the ambiguity of meaning attached to a single word. ROMULUS was, in fact, nourished and reared by ACCA LAURENTIA, wife of FAUSTULUS, an Italian shepherd. This good lady was not particularly celebrated for modesty or accuracy of conduct; whence she obtained the honourable sirname of Lupa, which signifies at once a she-wolf and a woman of loose character. Some of the authors who have written upon the Roman history, taking (as men frequently do when only two roads lay before them, a right and a wrong,) the most unnatural and absurd signification of the two, have contrived to make it out, that the founder of the Roman empire had a wolf for a wet-nurse; a very agreeable and natural guardian for a sucking child, it must be confessed! By the bye, if all our damsels of doubtful character were to be thus transformed, our collection of wild beasts would be astonishingly increased! I fear it would be necessary to revive the old Welch tribute of wolves heads,

if we did not mean to be devoured in our beds.

ACARNAS AND AMPHOTERUS,

the two sons of ALCMÆON and CALLIRHÖE, were among the most remarkable instances of the power of JUPITER, in the science of metamorphoses. These brothers were changed from children into men at the earnest desire of their mamma, and from "puling and puking in the nurse's arms," skipped over the intermediate stages, and became "soldiers, full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard:" truly it would be a capital thing for our military statesmen, and recruiting officers, could they but exert the same power of transformation—what thousands of recruits would pour from the nursery to fill up our warlike ranks, and, exchanging their rattles for muskets, terrify the enemies of Britain! If we may judge from the appearance of some of our spruce officers, this change has already taken place, though the transformation appears to be not perfectly completed. Our modern youths too, the inhabitants of Bond-street,

and its neighbourhood, seem to be extremely anxious to effect a similar metamorphosis, if we may judge from the worn-out and emaciated appearance of our dashing *men of sixteen*, who appear to be veterans in the laborious service of VENUS, BACCHUS, and FORTUNA.

PYGMALION

is a character often alluded to in literary composition. He was a statuary in the island of CYPRUS, and was so much displeased with the manners of his fair countrywomen, that he determined to remain single all his life-time. But CUPID does not suffer himself to be defied with impunity. He revenged himself on the artist for his contempt of a power to which even the Gods had yielded, by inspiring him with a violent passion for a beautiful marble statue, which he had lately made. Expiring with this extraordinary and hopeless flame, he implored the pity of VENUS, the tutelary deity of the island. Moved by his distress, the laughter-loving queen determined to relieve his pain, and PYGMALION returning from her temple, to his astonishment and delight,

beheld his beloved statue softening into life: a vivid colour spread over its cheeks, and the cold and insensible marble changed into a blooming maid. They were married, and had a son named PAPHUS, who founded the city afterwards called by his name.

The passion of PYGMALION, by the bye, though extraordinary, is not *unique*; for it is confessed that the generality of painters, of authors, and of statesmen, are, like him, most warm admirers of their own works, in which they perceive a thousand charms, imperceptible to other eyes.

Let us not, while we amuse ourselves with the other fables of antiquity, forget the entertaining one of the

PIGMIES AND THE CRANES;

from which, perhaps, Swift first took the hint of his satirical, philosophical, and valuable work, the travels of Gulliver among the Lilliputians.

The Pigmies were supposed to be a nation inhabiting a part of Ethiopia, whose stature seldom exceeded twelve inches.

For these giants the ancients found suitable habitations, by giving them egg-shells for houses. That philosophers themselves might have their share in the absurdities of this fable (and in absurdities they generally put in for a pretty good portion), we find the mighty Aristotle gravely asserting, that they resided very comfortably like rabbits, in burrows or holes made in the earth; and that, in summer time, they issued forth, armed with ponderous hatchets, to fell the ripe corn, in the same way as our wood-cutters master a forest of huge oaks!

As human nature will be always the same, whether in the giant or the Lilliput, and as the ancients, who had given their own vices to their very gods, could not consistently suppose any beings free from them, so we find that these diminutive creatures were supposed to be animated by the same ferocity as the HECTORS, ACHILLES', and AGAMEMNONS of mankind; and had their wars and battles as well as us. Mounted on fiery coursers eight inches high, or (à la Taffy) on goats with warlike horns, they marched to the charge upon their implacable enemies, the Cranes, who

paid them an annual visit of war and depredation.

The fabulists tell us that HERCULES himself did not escape their tremendous wrath; for that taking a nap after his contest with ANTÆUS, in the deserts of Africa, these furious little heroes commenced a terrible attack upon the south-east corner of his great toe, by a general discharge of sharp-pointed arrows.

HERCULES, awaking from his slumber, after a gentle snore, which had nearly blown his assailants into the skies, peeped about for some time to discover the cause of his disturbance; and at length perceiving his gigantic opponents, quietly tied up a few score of them in the skin of the Nemean lion, which he generally wore, and took them to EURYSTHEUS, much pleased with the courage of these animalculæ.

This tale is curious enough; and it must be confessed, that, if the race of *corporeal* Pigmies no longer exists, we have at least an abundance of mental Lilliputians, whose vast geniuses soar with much exertion to the comprehension of a cork-screw; who find the same labour necessary to overcome

the difficulties of a syllogism, which to another suffices to overthrow a system; and who yet, like the ancient Pigmies, cannot avoid discharging their petty arrows at the Hercules's of literature.

But let us return to our transformations. You must have frequently beheld a bird sweeping over the face of the waters, as if in a vain search for a resting-place. It is

THE HALCYON*,

a bird, often alluded to by authors, who was fabled to build its nest on the waters of the ocean, which were always calm while the favoured mother was so employed. It was once, according to the mythologists, a princess, daughter of EOLUS, god of winds: she was married to CEYX, king of Trachinia, who being obliged to consult a distant oracle, embarked on board of a vessel, which foundered in a storm two days after. The hapless HALCYON was informed by MORPHEUS, in a dream, of her husband's

* Or Kingsfisher.

melancholy fate.—The next morning her vision was fatally confirmed; the body of Ceyx being cast at her feet, as she wandered on the sea-shore. She precipitated herself in despair into the waves; but the Gods, in pity, bore her up, and changed her into the bird above described. Her husband shared in this transformation; and their melancholy fate has been handed down to posterity by some of the most elegant writers, both ancient and modern.

We have some happy efforts of the *pencil* on this subject, as well as of the *pen*, particularly by a modern artist of considerable eminence.

ARION *,

a celebrated poet of antiquity, had a very singular adventure: having acquired immense riches by his profession, at Corinth, he embarked on board a Corinthian ship to return to his native country, Lesbos. The sailors, whose avarice was excited by his wealth, determined to murder him, and

* Falconer, in his beautiful poem, the Shipwreck, describes himself by this name.

possess themselves of his treasures. ARION, finding no intreaties could move their horrid resolution, requested permission to play a tune on his lyre. When he had finished, he jumped into the waves; and immediately a number of dolphins, attracted round the ship by the harmony, supported him on their backs, and carried him on shore! He returned to Corinth; and Periander, the monarch, ordered the sailors to be crucified. This same gentleman must have been a most complete master of tweedle-dum, tweedle-dee; and most of our modern navigators would give something to handle a harp in such style. It would save many a poor fellow from a watery grave. In case of a dangerous leak being discovered, instead of calling "All hands to the pumps," the word would be "All hands to the "music." Half a dozen jigs, rigadoons, or sonatas, would then be played; and the crew, instead of their cork jackets, would just clap under one arm a fiddle or flute, and under the other a bag of biscuits and a few quids of tobacco, and overboard they'd go, swimming away on their dolphins, like so many sea gods!

Now I have convinced you of the infinite advantages attending a knowledge of music, I have no doubt you will immediately fall to studying it, in case you should ever chance to have occasion to trust your charming person to the changeable domains of NEPTUNE.

That you may have time for this purpose, I will not engage your attention any longer for the present, and hope you will send me word what progress you make in your new pursuit. Adieu!

LETTER XVII.

THE beautiful lakes you pointed out to me the other evening, and with which you seemed so much delighted, brought to my recollection two very celebrated ones, which I will now give you a short account of.

THE LAKES OF THE PALISCI

were two small pieces of water on Mount Etna. The origin of them is as follows:—JUPITER having seduced THALIA, or, as some say, the nymph ETNA, concealed her, while pregnant, in the bowels of the earth, in order to save her from the vengeance of JUNO. When the nymph's time was up, the ground opened, and two children were brought forth, who received the name of PALISCI, or "born again from the earth," and who were afterwards ranked among the gods! At the moment of their birth,

the two lakes above mentioned were formed, which were therefore consecrated to the PALISCI, who were greatly revered by the Sicilians, and to whom temples were raised near the place of their birth, in which divine worship was paid to them. Oracles were delivered from the temples of the earth-born brothers, celebrated for the explicit answers which the applicants received. As to the lakes, they were resorted to as a kind of awful witnesses, in all controversies of importance; for on their borders the most solemn oaths were taken, a breach of which was always punished by the gods, in a most exemplary manner. In short, they were to mortals what the river Styx was to the Divinities. It is on the borders of these formidable lakes that Madame Genlis has laid the principal scenes of that pleasing little piece which she has composed from the story of DAHPNIS and PANROSE; the outlines of which I will give you, lest you may not have met with the works of the agreeable authoress I have just mentioned.

DAPHNIS was the son of MERCURY, by a Sicilian nymph. He received from the

muses a taste for pastoral poetry; in which he greatly excelled, as well as in rural music, in which he had been instructed by PAN. He became enamoured of the nymph PANROSE; and on the borders of the lakes of PALISCI entreated the gods to punish him with blindness, if he ever proved inconstant to the object of his flame. Alas! human nature is prone to err. Possessed of her whom he admired, he too soon forgot his vows; and yielding to his admiration of another fair-one, was deprived of sight!

I fear, if conjugal infidelity were to be always punished in this manner, the number of those whose "eye-balls roll in vain," would be great indeed; and that the *Egyptian* would be less destructive than the *Palician* opthalmia!

PANDORA *

and her box you must have certainly heard of, as being the treacherous gift of JUPITER to PROMETHEUS, in order to

* From "*Pan-doron*" "*all-gift*;" as being furnished with every gift necessary for the happiness of man.

punish him for stealing fire from heaven. If you recollect, she was provided with a chest, containing every evil which has since afflicted human nature. This she was desired to present (as enclosing a most invaluable treasure) to the man who married her. PROMETHEUS was too cunning to be taken in the snare, and sent the damsel packing with her merchandise. His brother*, less wise, married her, received her casket, and, on opening it, let loose on the earth the troubles it contained.' We have, in literature, many allusions to PANDORA's box; but most authors are agreed, that of all the plagues she brought with her none equalled the fair-one herself! It is probable her deary, like many modern husbands, was decidedly of the same opinion.

ATALANTA

was a nymph in ancient times, who ran with such incredible speed that scarce any

* Epimetheus.

mortal could overtake her. Being disinclined to the marriage state, she declared that no one should possess her hand but him who could outstrip her in the race. Man is so fond of the pleasure of pursuing that which flies from him that many engaged in the contest, though a penalty was inflicted on the unsuccessful lover, which one would have thought would have been sufficient to have damped the ardour of most suitors. This was no less than *death*; not inflicted in the modern fashion, by the *eyes*, but by the *hands* of the fair-one. Many perished in the attempt, yet the vanity and rashness of human nature still supplied her with new victims; till VENUS presented one of her lovers (HIPPOMENES) with three golden apples. These he threw down before her, at some distance from each other, during the race; and she stopping, with the natural curiosity of a female, to take them up, HIPPOMENES, by this artifice, gained the race, and his mistress—and Heaven bless him with his prize! For my part, I am of a humbler turn, and should never have wished for a wife with such *killing* charms!

My dear sister has often heard me mention

MIDAS,

who possessed the power of turning every thing he touched into gold. Heavens! how useful would such an ally be to our modern ministers: they would keep his touching faculty in full employment! This gentleman had, however, as you well know, a trifling defect to counterbalance his wonderful powers. This was no other than wearing a pair of asses ears: an honour conferred upon him by APOLLO, for judging that his music was inferior to that of the Sylvan deity, PAN! Gracious heavens! Were all condemned to wear such ornaments who had happened to merit them, what a glorious collection of long-eared sparks we might meet with!

ANCÆUS,

one of the sons of NEPTUNE, gave rise to the famous proverb, that "many things

"happen between the cup and the lip," in the following manner:—one of his servants, whom he had pressed to work beyond his strength, in the vineyard, told him, that notwithstanding his anxiety about the wine, it would never be in his power to taste it. ANCÆUS immediately called for a cup of the liquor, to convince the prophetic servant of his falsehood; who still persisted in his prediction, adding the words above quoted. As his master lifted the wine to his mouth, a person ran in to inform him that a wild boar was ravaging the vineyard. He threw down the cup, and rushed out to oppose the invader, but was killed in the attempt.

Perhaps you may have heard of

MARPESA:

she was a lady who distinguished herself in the fabulous age, chiefly by the singularity of her taste. It happened that she was married to IDAS (whom, contrary to the custom of most wedded fair-ones, she tenderly loved). APOLLO, however, took a

fancy to her pretty face, and even carried his admiration so far as to run away with her. IDAS followed him, determined on revenge; but they were separated by JUPITER, who informed the fair-one that she was at liberty to accompany which of the beaus she pleased. The lady returned to her husband, leaving APOLLO in the utmost astonishment at her want of judgment, as he termed it; and really it is probable that he would not have met with similar treatment from many of the sex: at least, such is the malicious comment of some authors on this story.

PROCRUSTES

was a very famous robber, and chanced to resemble some modern zealots; for as they wish all mankind to be of the same cast of mind and opinions, so he had a singular inclination for seeing all men of the same stature. He therefore used to place his prisoners on an iron bed, and if they did not measure quite so much as they ought, stretched them till they attained the proper

dimensions. Rather an unpleasant operation this!—It was still worse, however, with those who happened to be too tall; for he cut them shorter! From this pretty custom originates the well-known saying of "PROCUSTES" bed, to signify the arbitrary disposition of some systematising authors and captious critics, who will have the actions or writings of others to be regulated exactly according to their rules, systems, and ideas.

Another gentleman, much known and often mentioned in modern times, was

TANTALUS,

who, for some crime or other, was placed in TARTARUS, beneath the bough of a tree loaded with the most delicious fruits, which, whenever he attempted to pluck them, were borne beyond his reach by a violent gust of wind. He was likewise tormented by eternal thirst; and though he stood in water up to his chin, yet the moment he endeavoured to drink it vanished!

This ingenious fable must certainly have

been invented by some poor fellow of a poet, who had danced attendance on the heels of his patron, in hourly and anxious expectation of reaping the reward of his assiduity; and his frequent and tormenting failures must have inspired him with the first idea of the ingenious, but terrible, punishment I have just described.

TANTALUS must not be separated from his companion

SISYPHUS,

whose fate was nearly as hard. He was doomed to toil up a steep hill, rolling before him a huge stone, which had no sooner reached the summit, than it descended again with such impetuosity as to render ineffectual all his exertions to stop it. Were I desired to name the inventor of this fable, I should either give it to some poor fellow whose labours to accumulate a little competence were continually frustrated, by the rapacity of tax-gatherers, or to a much more uncommon phenomenon, a patriot monarch (such as Justinian or Alfred),

whose efforts to repel the invaders of his country were unremittingly exerted, and yet hourly rendered useless by new swarms of foes!—Probability is, it must be confessed, on the side of the first supposition; for we see thousands in the situation of the mechanic, but few, very few, in that of the beneficent prince.

But if Mr. Sisyphus is not yet tired with his rolling stone, nor Mr. Tantalus with playing at bob-cherry, I must frankly confess I am fatigued with writing their histories.—I shall therefore e'en leave them without ceremony; wishing the one a little rest, and the other either better luck or a worse appetite.

LETTER XVIII.

You must not imagine, my dearest sister! that Sisyphus and Tantalus end the list of your tormentors.—You are doomed to labour through a few more pages still, and may take advantage of the conclusion of my last letter, to make a very pretty comparison between your situation and that of Tantalus; as I suppose you are in anxious hopes that every scribble will be the last, and yet find that the pleasing word "*Finis*" still flies before you.

The cause of my taking up the pen again at present is to mention a circumstance so honourable to the fair sex, that it must not be suffered to sleep in oblivion; viz. that all the moral virtues were deified by the Romans, and almost every one of them received a *female* name.

Thus Piety, Pity, Clemency, Modesty, Concord, &c. were all females Such

an exalted idea had the antients of the female character. Whether the moderns would entertain the same opinion, or whether they may have equal reason, we shall not be so impertinent as to enquire.

Every virtue was represented by a statue, accompanied by suitable emblems. Thus, PIETY was personified by a young and beautiful female, throwing incense on an altar. TEMPERANCE held a bridle in her hand, to shew that we ought to restrain our inclinations; a hint very necessary to moderns as well as antients, especially to a few of our worshipful aldermen, and gentlemen of the common council. CLEMENCY wore an olive branch, in symbol of peace and forgiveness. Would to heaven her statue were placed at the doors of many great monarchs, who, alas! too often require such a monitor.

MODESTY, contrary to the custom of the fashionable part of our fair countrywomen, was thickly cloathed, and closely veiled; while HONESTY, who needed no disguise, was dressed quite *a la mode*, in a transparent vest.

FORTITUDE was represented leaning

on her sword, as if prepared to oppose any new danger with courage; whilst JUSTICE, holding an evenly poised balance, was in no danger of being mistaken for a lawyer, a statesman or a conqueror.

One of the celebrated Romans built a temple to VIRTUE, and another to HONOUR; and by a just and happy contrivance erected them in such a manner, that it was impossible to enter the latter without passing through the former—a striking lesson to mankind, that true glory can only be obtained by pursuing the paths of virtue.

But why need I cite the sex of the virtues in support of the female character? A thousand traits in history speak loudly in their favour. In fact, were I to attempt to enumerate the heroic deeds of the female sex, their praise alone would fill a volume: let us, however, rescue from obscurity the generous ISMENE, the daughter of ŒDIPUS, who, when the tyrant CREON had condemned her sister to suffer death, for burying POLYNICES, their unfortunate brother, contrary to his commands, declared that she had participated in the fault, and demanded to suffer with her sister.

The history of PICUS, an ancient king of Italy, also is remarkable for the following circumstance, viz. that when he was changed (according to the fabulists) into a woodpecker, his wife CANENS was so disconsolate, that she pined away and died. How different was her taste to that of our modern fair-ones! But these ancients were strange creatures.

But joking apart, the fair sex have furnished us with innumerable instances of heroic virtue; and if modern history is less filled with them than the ancient, it is only to be attributed to their frequency, which causes them to be ranked among common events. When Franklin first drew lightning from the clouds, the fact was recorded by all the literati of Europe: if it were done now every day in the week no one would notice it. So when a wife first died for grief at the loss of her husband, history recording the surprising fact. Now, conjugal affection and every other female virtue is so common, that it is the absence of them only that is noticed.

Among the numerous instances of female heroism to be met with in ancient writers,

I have selected a few peculiarly striking; and shall begin with the wives of the Phocians, whose noble conduct was the occasion of those festivals being instituted, which were called the ELAPHEBOLIA, or the offering of the deer to DIANA the huntress This ceremony originated from the Phocians having been defeated with vast slaughter by the Thessalians. Reduced to despair, the Phocians were undetermined what step to take, in order to avoid being totally subdued by the enemy. At length, DEIPHANTUS proposed to his countrymen to erect an immense funeral pile, and placing upon it their wives, children, and effects, set fire to the whole, sooner than submit to slavery. The magnanimous women, one and all, applauded the proposition of DEIPHANTUS, and decreed him a crown, as the reward of his noble spirit. The Phocians erected the pile; but before they set fire to it engaged the Thessalians with such irresistible impetuosity, that they totally discomfited them, and returned completely victorious to their wives.

To these noble lasses may be added a long list of beauties, whose affection for their

brothers, husbands, and sons, was stronger than the desire of life. Witness the amiable sisters of HYAS; for whose death they felt such poignant grief, that all the five wept themselves to death, and were placed by JUPITER among the stars, where they form the constellation called the HYADES, the rising and setting of which were supposed by the antients (allusive perhaps to their tears) to be attended with a great deal of rain. (Appendix.)

The sisters of the imprudent PHAETON were equally attached to their unfortunate brother; and so moved the Gods by their incessant grief, that they were changed into poplars, and their tears into amber!

Those of MELEAGER, expiring with the bitterest sorrow, were also metamorphosed into birds!

ERIGONE had not a less tender regard for her father, and put an end to her existence when she heard that he had been murdered by some peasants *.

* ICARIUS, the father of ERIGONE, had received from BACCHUS a present of wine, which he gave to some shepherds to taste: they became intoxicated, and their friends and neighbours, believing the poisonous beverage, as they

The singular fate of HALCYONE, and her tender attachment to her husband, I have before mentioned :—that of EVADNE was such, that, when her partner expired, she threw herself upon his funeral pile, disdaining to survive him.

CLITE also gave up life when she could no longer enjoy it with the husband of her heart; as did ARGATHONA, the wife of RHESUS, who falling in the Trojan war, his faithful partner accompanied him to the realm of shades.

HARPALICE, the daughter of a king of Thrace, seeing her father in danger, rushed into the heat of the battle, saved the author of her being, and defeated the troops of the enemy, though led by the son of ACHILLES himself, the terrible and cruel NEOPTOLEMUS *.

termed it, had deprived them of reason, sacrificed ICARIUS to their fury. The juice of the grape has produced such a mingled tissue of good and evil, that it yet remains to be determined whether the man who first presented it to his countrymen deserved the fate of ICARIUS, or that of BACCHUS.

* Named frequently PYRRHUS, from his red hair; and sometimes NEOPTOLEMUS, or "The new soldier," from his coming to the Grecian war towards its conclusion.

Among the females distinguished for their attachment to their husbands, I forgot to include one who has become very justly and highly celebrated. This was

PANTHEA,

the wife of ABRADATES, king of Susa, who was taken prisoner by the troops of CYRUS. The illustrious conqueror did himself infinite honour by the noble manner in which he treated his fair captive; and her husband, enchanted with his conduct, determined to surrender himself to so generous an enemy. He even united his forces to those of CYRUS; but unfortunately, in the very first battle, after exhibiting prodigies of valour by the side of his friend, he fell, mortally wounded. PANTHEA, no longer finding any thing to endear her to existence, fell on the sword of her lord, and thus reunited herself to the object of her affections *.

* It may be necessary (as these pages may form a part of the studies of infancy) to warn the youthful reader, that the act of depriving ourselves of life, from *any* motive, is incompatible with the duty we owe to our

JULIA AND CLAUDIA,

Roman virgins, were as remarkable for chastity, as those above enumerated were for heroism or affection. The former, suspected of no longer deserving the title of a vestal virgin, proved her chastity by carrying from the river to the temple a quantity of water in a sieve, after invoking the assistance of the Goddess VESTA: the lat-

Creator, and displeasing in his sight: it is only the ignorance and barbarity of former ages which forms an apology for PANTHEA, and other persons of both sexes, who have deprived themselves of that existence which they were bound to have preserved, in order to fulfil those duties, for the performance of which the Deity had been pleased to call them into being. But at the time when PANTHEA, LUCRETIA, CATO, &c. terminated their existences, the sublime truths of morality and religion were lost amidst a cloud of superstitious absurdities; and we must therefore admire the *causes* of their actions, and pay a just tribute to the conjugal affection of the one, the high-spirited chastity of the other, and the patriotism of the third, while we condemn the *deed* itself, which robbed the world of their virtues, and defeated the all-wise intentions of the Supreme.

ter, for the same purpose, drew after her with her girdle a vessel which had ran aground, and resisted every effort to move it.

To this list I could add many more, were not I afraid of tiring your patience, which I suspect already begins to be in a languishing condition: we will therefore turn to other subjects.

The unfortunate DEJANIRA is supposed to have caused the death of her husband HERCULES, by the credulity with which she sent him the fatal tunic poisoned with the mingled blood of NESSUS and the HYDRA.—The hero and his lady travelling together were impeded by the river EVENUS, which had overflowed its banks. The centaur NESSUS offered to convey DEJANIRA across on his back; but when he gained the other shore, and thought himself beyond the reach of HERCULES's vengeance, he attempted to run away with his fair companian:—the husband, instead of being obliged to him for thus taking his wife off his hands, dispatched after him, with a vigorous arm, one of the dreadful arrows which had been immersed in the blood of the Lernean

HYDRA. The ravisher, intent on revenge, even in the agonies of death, drew from his person the blood-stained vest which he wore, and giving it to DEJANIRA, "Receive," said he, "this garment; the mysterious power of which is such, that should your husband ever prove untrue, this, once worn, will recall him to his duty." The credulous wife received the tunic, and when HERCULES became enamoured of IOLE, and sent to DEJANIRA for a robe, he received from her the fatal gift of NESSUS: he put it on, and instantly a mortal distemper seized his very bones. He felt unutterable pains; and having for some time contended in vain with the raging poison which boiled in his veins, he tore from Mount Œta its aged trees, and heaping them up towards heaven, formed a huge pile, on the top of which he threw himself, and then commanding one of his companions to set fire to the whole, he expired undaunted amidst the flames. JUPITER, amidst loud and repeated peals of thunder, raised his spirit to heaven, there to be ranked among the Gods; while the unhappy DEJANIRA, too late lamenting her jealousy and credulity, and un-

able to bear an eternal separation from the hero she adored, put an end to her wretched existence; leaving her example a terrible warning to her sex, how they depend on any other charm over their husbands' hearts than the mild influence of their affection and their virtues.

This caution, however requisite it may be to many females, is totally unnecessary to my amiable friend, whose goodness and whose charms form too powerful a talisman ever to fail of effect on the heart of the being to whom she may entrust her happiness.

That every blessing may be the reward of those virtues, and that it may be long ere time steals from her one of those charms, is the sincere wish of—

&c. &c.

LETTER XIX.

I HAD entertained great hopes that I should not have occasion to trouble my fair pupil with many more letters on the subject of mythology; I have, however, recollected some other characters which I must not neglect to make you acquainted with:—for example, the celebrated and gallant

PERSEUS.

I have already informed you that mademoiselle MEDUSA got her nob chopped off by the youthful hero, but I think I omitted to give you any farther particulars about his lordship.

He was the offspring of JUPITER and DANÆ, the daughter of ACRISIUS, who having learned, from the oracle, that he

should fall by the hands of his grandson, and not by any means relishing the information, had shut up poor DANÆ in a brazen tower, as a sure preventive of danger. Alas! poor old gentleman! he little knew the difficulty of conquering little master CUPID. JUPITER, who thought it a pity the poor lady should lead such a solitary life, obviated all difficulties by raining himself down the chimney in a shower of gold: in consequence of this event, little PERSEUS made his appearance; and ACRISIUS, finding how ill he had succeeded in his scheme, determined to settle the matter at once, and handed both baby and nurse into the sea, on board a nutshell of a boat, and, wishing them a good voyage to the other world, left them to their contemplations. In this plan, too, ACRISIUS missed his aim: the little skiff was driven to SERIPHOS, when a fisherman, named DICTYS, found them, and carried his prize to the king POLYDECTES. The little squaller was put under the care of MINERVA's priests; but growing up more distinguished every day for spirit and intrepidity, began to be no

favourite of POLYDECTES', who had taken a fancy to mamma, which he thought young PERSEUS would not much approve of.—With intent, therefore, to make an ostensible cause of displeasure towards the youth, he invited him, among many others, to a grand entertainment, at which every guest was expected to appear with a beautiful horse, as a present to the king—a present which he knew PERSEUS had not the power of making. The young hero declared his inability to present the monarch with a steed; but promised him a more singular gift, viz. the head of MEDUSA. POLYDECTES gladly accepted the proposal, on two accounts; first, that it would remove from his court so watchful a spy upon his conduct to DANÆ; and secondly, that from the imminent hazard of the attempt there was every probability of PERSEUS falling a sacrifice to his intrepidity.

The deities, however, patronised the young hero; for MINERVA lent him her shield, which, being polished to the highest degree, served as a looking-glass to reflect every object. MERCURY put into his hands his *herpe*, or short sword of diamonds: (oh!

that some kind deity would make me a present of such a pretty toy!) PLUTO presented him with a helmet, which rendered him invisible; (how many commanders would long for such a *convenient* ornament!) and that he might make the more dispatch, MERCURY lent him for the occasion (it being long vacation or idle time with him, I suppose, just then), his little rapid wings. —Thus accoutred, PERSEUS set out on his expedition; and taking a trip first to the GRAÏÆ sisters, to the GORGONS (whom nature, being rather short in the articles of eyes and teeth at their birth, had only favoured with one of each kind, which served the three); he contrived to learn from them where their pretty sisters resided, by stealing their only tooth and eye, which he refused to return till he received the information he required. Fraught with this intelligence, he flew away to the desarts of Scythia (some say Libia), and alighting after a few thousand miles flight—tolerably well fagged, you may suppose—he caught the damsels napping; but knowing that if he once set eyes upon their pretty faces he should be converted into stone, and not

having the least ambition to become a handsome statue, he cast his eyes on the shield of PALLAS, and being thus directed by its reflection, he struck mademoiselle MEDUSA a most ungallant blow on the neck, which left her head at a small distance from her body. The immortal sisters awoke at the noise: but PLUTO's helmet rendering PERSEUS invisible, he had nothing to fear from their resentment; so snatching up the nob, away he scampered, or rather flew.

Crossing the desarts of LYBIA (where the blood from MEDUSA's pericranium produced PEGASUS, and a few thousands of snakes, which are still very troublesome in those parts), he arrived at the court of ATLAS, where, announcing himself as the son of JUPITER, he expected to be treated in a very gentlemanly style; but unluckily some old oracle had informed ATLAS, that he should be exposed to great danger from the arrival of a descendant of JUPITER in his dominions: he therefore wished to send his guest a packing; violent measures were resorted to, and PERSEUS, indignant at such cavalier treatment, indulged his opponent with a peep at MEDUSA's head, which in-

stantly converted him into a rock! His next adventure was the relieving ANDROMEDA from the monster. This poor maid, in compliance with some stupid vow, or cruel order of the skies, was tied naked to a rock, to be devoured by this ugly sea-beast: PERSEUS, who very justly thought that pretty girls were not made to serve as luncheons for a sea-calf, promised to release her, if her papa would transfer her from the monster's jaws to his arms. This, you may suppose, was agreed to, *nem. con.* Up sprang PERSEUS half a score fathoms into the air, and descending with the stoop of an eagle, presented the disappointed beast, instead of a mouthful of delicate flesh, with half a yard of hard sword-blade. He gave one hideous groan (enough to frighten a regiment), and sunk, to rise no more.

The maiden relieved, and the nuptials celebrated, every thing wore the face of joy; when lo, and behold! a rival appeared.—PHINEAS, uncle to ANDROMEDA, attempted to carry off the bride, with whom he was enamoured; but PERSEUS, not having a taste sufficiently modern to be grateful for the intrusion, thought that some of his

attendants and abettors, as well as himself, would make very pretty busts, and turning MEDUSA's knob righti n their faces, quieted them in an instant. There they stood, each in his respective posture; and there PERSEUS left them.

Returning to SERIPHOS with ANDROMEDA, he came just in the nick of time to save his mother, from whom POLYDECTES was endeavouring to obtain by force what had been refused to his arts and entreaties. DICTYS, who had originally saved him and his mother, was defending her from the king's violence. PERSEUS, grateful for his virtuous interference, just increased the stock of stones, by adding POLYDECTES to the number, and then placed DICTYS* on the vacant throne.

Wishing now to return to his native clime, he embarked with spousy and mamma, and landing in the Peloponnesian dominions, he found the king of that part celebrating games of skill and agility. PERSEUS joined in the festival, and unfortunately throwing

* DICTYS is by the best authors supposed to have been the brother of POLYDECTES; which is certainly the most rational account of the matter.

a quoit (a thick round plate of metal) with considerable force, it struck a man whom it killed. This sufferer turned out to be Acrisius, his grandfather, whose oracle was thus verified, notwithstanding all his precautions; indeed he seems to have taken great pains to ensure his fate, for he left his own states and came to the court where he was killed, in order to avoid Perseus, who he was informed had set out for his dominions.

Rendered melancholy and unhappy by this fatal accident, Perseus exchanged his kingdom of Argos (to which the decease of Acrisius had made him heir) for that of Tirynthus and Argolis. Here he built the city of Mycene, and after his decease received divine honours. He was much venerated by the Egyptians, who pretended that he often appeared among them in shoes two cubits long (beating our square-toed beaus hollow), and they always considered his appearance as an omen of a very fertile year.

Some mythologists have made him a constellation; and indeed he seems to have better merited the honour than some gen-

try who very quietly retain their posts overhead.

I forgot to observe that he returned all his heavenly loans like a man of honour, and placed MEDUSA's head (a curious present to a lady) on MINERVA's Ægis, where it has remained, for ought I know to the contrary, ever since.

"Music has charms to soothe the savage breast,
"To soften rocks, and bend the knotted oak."—

If you are not an amateur of this charming art, you may perhaps suspect the truth of my poetical quotation, but the point is indisputable: witness the surprising talents of signor ORPHEUS—talents which must entirely annihilate every doubt which you might otherwise have reasonably entertained as to the amazing effects of harmony; softening of rocks, and giving to sturdy oaks the elasticity of reeds, being usually considered as works of some difficulty; and the modern professors of tweedle-dum tweedle-dee not having yet attained to much proficiency in the process.

You most probably have often met with allusions to the history of this genteel youth.

ORPHEUS

was so great a musician, that even brutes and stones danced to his notes; and while he played on his lyre, you might frequently see a bear performing *a pas grave* with infinite majesty, while a monkey figured away in a hornpipe! The cows and horses managed cotillions in the first style; and the noble tribes of donkeys and pigs amused themselves in a country dance, grunting and braying time with a most uncommon degree of nasal expression!

The forests were not more insensible than their inhabitants; but dancing down from their mountains in jigs, rigadoons, and pasdeux (oaks, elms, and firs, all mingled together), they surrounded the musician, enraptured with his skill! The stones I have already said likewise joined in the festivity, and rolled through allamands, savoyards, &c. with considerable *eclat*!— Obedient to his notes, he might have done what he would with his lyre struck sub-

jects.—He had but to sing a few verses, and his flinty companions would jump on one another to form a wall, while his leafy slaves, at the word of command, arranged themselves into rafters, beams, &c.; so that he could play himself a house in half an hour, with as much ease as his Italian descendants quaver their pockets full of guineas!

This gentleman had a wife,

EURYDICE,

who was bit by a snake and died. He had so horrid a taste, that he went down to **** not to *avoid*, but to *seek* his rib. His music so charmed PLUTO and PROSERPINE, that they restored EURYDICE to life, on condition that she should walk after him till they got out of the subterranean domains, and that he should not once cast a look behind him. —Love drove the injunction out of his head.—He turned, and lost her for ever!

Now some have said, that PLUTO at first was in a great passion with ORPHEUS for his presumption; but thinking no punish-

ment he could inflict sufficiently severe, determined to complete his revenge by giving him his wife back again, but that, enchanted by the music, he repented his cruel design, and so kept madam EURYDICE fast;—an idea which has been well and frequently versified. However, we shall not give much credit to this, if we consider, that though we cannot deny the wife to have been the worst bargain, yet the punishment with her could not be eternal: this PLUTO well knew, and therefore would not have been contented with a few years of penance, had he been really bent on revenge.

ORPHEUS is said to have been one of the Argonauts, and to have saved his companions from the destructive sounds of the Sirens by singing the praises of the Gods, in so sweet, clear, and loud a voice, as to overcome the notes of the enchantresses, whose arts were thus completely baffled.

This anecdote conveys with it a piece of moral instruction, viz. that the best preservatives against the seductions of pleasure are the sober, yet delightful, charms of rational religion.

BELLEROPHON

is well known as the conqueror of the CHIMERA, which I have elsewhere described. —He happened to be remarkably handsome, and this unfortunate circumstance got him into some scrapes; for the wife of PRŒTUS, king of Argos, at whose court he resided, struck with his beauty, took it into her head to fall in love with him. The young gentleman, who seems to have been quite an antique in matters of this kind, instead of receiving the lady's advances with the gallantry of a modern beau, talked about the rights of hospitality, her duty to her husband, &c. &c.

The fair-one, instead of admiring his virtue, took a most inveterate dislike to him for the affront he put upon her charms, which it appears extremely probable were not in the highest degree captivating, otherwise

our hero might have been less strict in his morality. Determined to ruin poor BELLEROPHON, she persuaded her husband (men are easily deceived) that the young gentleman had attempted to seduce her. The king, not wishing to punish the insult himself, as the offender was his guest, dispatched him to his father-in-law with an epistle, in which he requested that JOBATES would do the bearer the honour to cut his throat. Poor BELLEROPHON, little thinking what pretty letters of recommendation he carried with him, set off for Lycia, and presented his credentials to the king:—JOBATES, who did not wish to turn butcher himself, and yet was willing to oblige PROETUS, sent his visitor upon many dangerous expeditions, where he took it for granted he would get his head broken. Among these tasks were those of conquering the Amazons, the Solymi, and the Chimera. BELLEROPHON having, by the assistance of MINERVA and the horse PEGASUS, successfully accomplished every thing he undertook; JOBATES employed a body of assassins to dispatch him. These, however, were

cut to pieces by the hero, who was afterwards reconciled to the Lycian king, married his daughter, and succeeded to his throne.

The manner of his death is variously reported; but it is supposed to have happened a few years before the war of Troy.

Thus far I have waded through the adventures of the mythological personages, who cut the principal figure in fabulous history; but I hope to give my fair friend a more particular account of this branch of literature in conversation, as it would render it too prolix to insert a more detailed description in these familiar scribbles; I must, therefore, beg my amiable pupil to remind me of all the names I have already mentioned, and of all those she may hereafter meet with in authors. Before I quit the subject, however, I must just glance at a few personages of the fabulous ages; particularly those concerned in the war of Troy, who shall be the subject of to-morrow's scrawl. For this evening I think my little friend has sustained sufficient fatigue, and in admiration

of her patience, I resign her to the dominion of SOMNUS; entreating her to believe me, if not the most entertaining, at least the most sincerely devoted of her friends.

LETTER XX.

I PROMISED you, my amiable friend, in my last epistle, an account of the fiery youths who figured away in the charming amusement of throat-cutting before the walls of Troy.

Foremost among these stands

ACHILLES,

the son of THETIS. She dipped him in STYX to render him invulnerable, and had him bred up by CHIRON, a Centaur, (the Centaurs were half man, half horse.)* ACHILLES was fed on the marrow of wild beasts, and such other *delightful* messes, to make

* The nations who first mounted horses frightened other people, who thought the beast and his rider one animal.

him strong. His mother, when the Trojan war took place, knowing that if he engaged in it he would be killed (for he was vulnerable in the heel, by which she held him when he was ducked in STYX), concealed him among the females of a neighbouring court. ULYSSES, who suspected this, disguised himself as a merchant, and took several female ornaments to the palace, but placed (as if by accident) a sword among them. This ACHILLES immediately preferred to all the trinkets, and was thus discovered. He went to the war in invulnerable armour, made by Vulcan, and was distinguished as the first hero among the Greeks; but quarrelling with the king AGAMEMNON, on account of a female captive, BRISEÏS, retired from the league, till the death of his friend PATROCLUS * induced

* PATROCLUS, as observed above, was the immediate cause of the return of ACHILLES to the Grecian league; for having prevailed on that hero to lend him his arms, and permit him in them to attack the Trojan army, he was killed in battle (after making extraordinary slaughter among the enemy) by HECTOR and APOLLO. His death so enraged ACHILLES, that he joined once more the Grecian ranks; and after sacrificing an infinite number of Tro-

him to return to the field, and there meeting with HECTOR, the chief and defender of Troy, he killed him, and dragged his body with a barbarous triumph at his chariot wheels.

HECTOR's parting with his wife ANDROMACHE before the battle is finely described by HOMER, and is beyond dispute by far the most interesting part of the whole Iliad.

This master ACHILLES was greatly admired for his heroism, as they call it. But pray how did he shew it? why by clapping himself up in invulnerable armour, and then running about, fracturing the pericraniums of all the poor fellows he met with. Pretty proof of bravery, to be sure!

This sweet youth, to shew that he was a hero after death, as well as when living, appeared to the Grecians, and demanded that a poor girl (POLYXENA) whom he pretended to love during his life-time, should

jans to his fury, encountered and slew HECTOR, and indelibly disgraced his character, by dragging his gallant foe trailing prostrate in the dust round the tomb of PATROCLUS.

be sacrificed on his tomb, to appease his ghost; which was accordingly done by his son. A charming way, truly, of shewing affection!

THETIS, it is said, asked him, when very young, whether he preferred a long life of inglorious ease, or a short one of military fame: he chose the latter—(a story which, however, is not very compatible with his hiding among the girls).

As all cutthroats, or great men (the terms as generally used are nearly synonimous) are of the same stamp, you will not be surprised that ALEXANDER greatly admired this mighty butcher, and envied him the felicity of having a HOMER to record his achievements.

AJAX,

another Grecian, was chiefly remarkable for his enormous strength and thick scull. He contended with ULYSSES for the arms of ACHILLES, after the decease of that hero; but the blunt arguments of the rough soldier, though supported by the most important services, and acknowledged bravery,

were not a match for the art and eloquence of his smooth-tongued opponent. AJAX, filled with the most ungovernable rage at being thus foiled by a man whom he despised, became delirious, and fell upon his sword. The blood that flowed from his mortal wound was changed into the Hyacinth, a flower which was supposed to bear on its leaves the two first letters of the hero's name*!

Thus fell poor AJAX! who seems to have been the honestest fellow among the Greeks. He had distinguished himself frequently during the war, particularly in his combat with HECTOR, whom he had nearly saved (in the Hibernian way) from the spear of ACHILLES, by sending him to the shades below; for he pitched a small pebble at the Trojan of about half a ton weight, which gave HECTOR such a rough salutation, as

* The history of the Hyacinth is adorned by a double fable; for the poets say that APOLLO having accidentally killed a youth to whom he was very partial, named HYACINTHUS, he changed his favourite into the flower above mentioned, and engraved his lamentations on its leaves, *ai* being an exclamation of grief among the Grecians.

to take away all sensation from him! He recovered, however, by the assistance of APOLLO; and the evening drawing on, the combatants were parted by the heralds, and exchanged arms as a token of mutual admiration.

AJAX was called TELAMONIAN, or the son of Telamon, to distinguish him from Ajax Oileus, a very different character.

His competitor,

ULYSSES,

requires us to be a little more diffuse, on account of his being generally considered by the antients as the model of a wise man; and that he is also the subject of one of Homer's immortal works. (The Odyssey.)

This worthy gentleman was the son of ANTICLEA and LAERTES; or, with more probability, from his disposition, of the robber SISYPHUS; who, it is said, was honoured with the favours of ANTICLEA before her marriage with LAERTES.

He was one of the pretenders to the hand of HELEN; but thinking he had little chance

of success among so many rivals, he advised her father to make an agreement with the numerous suitors, that they should bind themselves with a solemn oath to leave the lady her free choice, and defend her, and the prince whom she might choose, from all injuries or insults.

By adopting this idea, papa avoided giving offence to any one; and HELEN making choice of MENELAUS, ULYSSES faced about, and paid his addresses to PENELOPE, whose hand he obtained. He then returned to ITHACA, where LAERTES resigned the crown to him. He did not, however, long enjoy himself in his kingdom, for HELEN was carried off by PARIS; and ULYSSES, being bound, like the other princes, by the oath he had himself proposed, was expected to join in the expedition undertaken against her ravisher. I have given you elsewhere an account of the scheme he formed to avoid the war, and his revenge on poor PALAMEDES for discovering it.

Arrived at the Grecian camp, our hero seems to have forgotten his PENELOPE entirely, and to have devoted himself to the cultivation of those arts which procured

him so universal a character for wisdom. He discovered ACHILLES in the manner I have before related, and brought him to join the forces of Greece. He killed RHESUS with the assistance of DIOMED, and carried off his horses*,—stole the Trojan palladium, and persuaded the Greeks to leave poor PHILOCTETES† on the solitary

* RHESUS was a Thracian king, who came to the assistance of Priam with a very large reinforcement. An oracle had given out, that Troy would never be taken, if once the horses of RHESUS tasted the grass of the Trojan plains. The Grecians, aware of this, sent DIOMED and ULYSSES to intercept him; who entered his tent in the night, murdered him in his sleep, and carried off his steeds to their camp.

† PHILOCTETES was one of the argonauts, and the intimate friend and companion of HERCULES, at whose death he received from that hero the arrows which he had poisoned in the gall of the HYDRA, accompanied by a solemn injunction not to inform any one where his remains were interred.

Philoctetes after this event became one of HELEN's admirers, and being called upon, like the other suitors, to join in the Trojan war, he embarked a body of troops on board seven ships, with which he joined the Grecian fleet at AULIS. His companions prevailed upon him to discover where the ashes of his friend were buried, which he did by striking the ground with his foot; an artifice by which he ima-

island of LEMNOS, because he had a wound in his foot, which did not smell particularly pleasant. This same wounded gentleman, however, he was afterwards under the necessity of coaxing back again, with many apologies; because the oracle had declared that Troy could not be taken without the

gined (for men often satisfy their consciences with flimsy evasions) that he had not broken his oath. Shortly after, however, he became sensible of his error; for one of the arrows of HERCULES fell from the quiver on his foot, and occasioned such terrible pains, with so unbearable a stench, that the Grecians, by the advice of ULYSSES, removed him to LEMNOS, where they left him to his fate. After ten years of lingering torture, however, his countrymen learning from the oracle, that the war could not be terminated without the arrows of HERCULES, sent ULYSSES and PYRRHUS (the sons of ACHILLES) to prevail on him to return to their camp, and assist their arms. Irritated at his sufferings, and the desertion of the Greeks, he not only refused, but prevailed on PYRRHUS to take him back to his own country. HERCULES, however, appeared to him, and commanded him to join the Grecian army, where ESCULAPIUS should put an end to his punishment. PHILOCTETES accordingly returned to the plains of Troy, and being cured of his wound, slew innumerable hosts of the enemy, particularly PARIS. The city being taken, he went to settle in Italy, and built a town called Petilia, in the province of Calabria.

arrows of HERCULES, which were in the possession of PHILOCTETES.

For these services he was rewarded with the arms of ACHILLES; and the Trojan war being ended, he prepared to return to ITHACA, which, however, he did not reach in a hurry. I have already informed you of his adventures with POLYPHEMUS, and with CIRCE, by whom he had a son (TELEGONUS), and who had charms sufficient to make him forget Penelope for a twelvemonth. *A propos*, I forgot to tell you how he came to the island of the enchantress.—He had landed in Eolia, where he met with a favourable reception from EOLUS, God of the winds, who presented him with several little bags, in which were neatly sewed up the gales that might prevent his arrival at Ithaca.

The prisoners did not much admire their confinement, and I suppose made some disturbance in their sacks; for the companions of Ulysses (I presume there were some ladies on board) were extremely curious to know what these same bags contained, and resolved to take a peep; they accordingly opened the canvas prisons, when lo! out

rushed a furious gale from each, which knocked down the peepers, and, taking a grand sweep over the ocean, kicked up such a storm that all the fleet perished, except the prince's ship, which was driven towards CIRCE's dominions!

Tired of the magician, he took a trip to the lower regions, to learn what other adventures he had to go through, and then came up again, when he had satisfied his curiosity.

By CIRCE's directions he escaped the SIRENS, SCYLLA, and CHARYBDIS; but landing in Sicily, his companions, who were rather hungry, killed some of Apollo's oxen, who, in return, sunk their ships, and they all (according to the sailor's phrase) went "to Davy's locker." Rather a severe punishment for liking fresh beef! ULYSSES, who did not relish a salt-water death, secured a plank, and floated to CALYPSO's island. The lady took a great fancy to him. He was not backward in returning her advances; and Penelope, a second time forgotten, troubled not the repose of her illustrious partner for seven long years. Is it surprising if spousy amused herself

also during this time? Of this, however, the Grecian did not think, or else cared little about the matter; till at length the Gods, who thought he never meant to get home, sent him word that he had rested himself long enough, and must think about Ithaca. CALYPSO did not much admire this, but there was no remedy; so she sobbed out an adieu, gave him a ship, and once more we find him afloat. He thought now he had nothing to do but make the best of his way home. Here he reckoned without his host. Gods have good memories, and NEPTUNE had not forgotten that this wise Greek had poked out the eye of his son POLYPHEMUS. Determined to give him a ducking, he raised a storm which sunk his vessel! (It is true this drowned a few innocent men, but such a trifle never broke any squares with the Grecian divinities.) ULYSSES, who verified the old proverb, that "when a man is born, &c." swam away stoutly, and arrived, with a tolerable dose of salt water in his inside, at the territories of the Phœcians. Here he was hospitably received, and a ship lent him to carry him to Ithaca. NEPTUNE, who seems

to have been tired of trying in vain to drown the Greek, left this vessel to itself, and ULYSSES was at last landed in his native isle.

Here, however, he had another trifling job on his hands, viz. to cut the throats of a hundred or two of suitors, who, thinking he had been absent an unconscionable time, and that it was hard poor PENELOPE should live solitary for ever, wished her to marry one of them. By the assistance of MINERVA, with whom he was a great favourite, he succeeded in transferring these rivals from the dominions of JUPITER to those of PLUTO; and having (by way of making a clear house) hung up a score or two of his female domestics, who had not acted exactly the part of LUCRETIAS, he took possession of his palace, of PENELOPE, and his kingdom.

He lived some years after this event very peaceably; but I have already informed you, that he had a son by CIRCE, named TELEGONUS. This youth, when arrived at years of maturity, determined to visit ITHACA, and make himself known to his father; but being shipwrecked and starving, he and

some of his companions took from the inhabitants, by force, the provisions refused to their entreaties. ULYSSES coming to the defence of his subjects, was killed by TELEGONUS, who did not know him; and thus terminated the existence of a man who has been styled the wisest of the Greeks! For my own part, I have so little of the antique in my composition, that I cannot possibly admire his character. The eternal dissimulation which he practised on every occasion; the reserve and distrust which he manifested even with his wife, and his son; the innumerable falsehoods which he told to every person he approached; but above all, his infamous conduct to Palamedes; induce me to pronounce him, without hesitation, a mean, reserved, suspicious, deceiving, thorough-paced scoundrel!

NESTOR

was remarkable for his age and wisdom, both of which have become proverbial. He retired unhurt from the Trojan war, and spent the rest of his life in peace. His years were extended to three times the age

of man; and it was thence customary for the Grecians to wish that their friends might attain the years of NESTOR.

MENELAUS

was the husband of lady HELEN, the fair cause of the war.

This Grecian did not want for courage; he engaged PARIS, and would infallibly have finished his career, had not VENUS snatched up her favourite in a cloud,* and carried him off to HELEN, justly supposing that the weight of her arms would not be quite so unpleasant as those of the sturdy Greek. MENELAUS being thus deprived of the pleasure of cracking his rival's pericranium, avenged himself, as well as he could, on the other Trojans, and would even have tried what kind of metal HECTOR's sword was made of; but his brother AGAMEMNON prevented him, well knowing that if he had played this last game, he would have met with a very heavy handed partner.

If MENELAUS was gifted with intrepidity, he was at least equally stocked with good nature; for he took HELEN again, not-

withstanding her naughty tricks, when the war had terminated in the destruction of Troy.

DIOMEDES

was celebrated for a very ungallant action, viz. for wounding the gentle goddess Venus, (who, however, had certainly no business in a field of battle.) Minerva, determined to drive her antagonist from the side of the Trojans, instructed this daring Greek in what manner to distinguish the feeble goddess, and commanded him to chase her from the combat.

This unfeeling soldier did not, however, always fight with such fair opponents; for he frequently met with rough Trojans, such as Hector and Eneas, with whom he exchanged very heavy knocks and thumps. He was extremely partial to that hero of the tongue, Ulysses, whom he accompanied in many of his expeditions, particularly his thieving ones, such as stealing the Trojan Palladium, the horses of Rhesus, &c.

After having sustained a multitude of

ugly compliments from his heavy-fisted opponents (whom however he did not leave unrequited,) he returned to his own country at the termination of the war. Here he found matters in a bad train; for VENUS (not forgetting her wound) had put it into the head of his wife EGIALE, that as her spousy chose to stay away from her so long, she would be much to blame if she did not console herself for his absence by the attentions of another beau.

Madam EGIALE thought this very good reasoning; and accordingly having bestowed her favours on one of her servants, was not much delighted to see DIOMEDES return alive from Troy; and thinking that ten years additional age had not much improved his beauty, she conceived that the readiest mode of settling all difficulties would be to give him a passport to the dominions of PLUTO, where he might rejoin some of his friends whom he had lost in the war.

DIOMEDES, however, discovered her intentions; and as they did not exactly meet with his approbation, he left madam EGIALE to herself, and, setting sail for Italy, bid an eternal adieu to his native clime. Ar-

rived at the end of his voyage, he built a city called Argyrippa, and not being yet frightened from the matrimonial state (these Grecians were bold fellows) married the daughter of Daunus, a neighbouring king. At his decease, which happened many years after, his followers were so disconsolate, that the deities changed them into a kind of birds resembling swans, who were afterwards called the birds of Diomedes, and were supposed to be remarkable for the tameness with which they suffered Grecians to approach them, while they flew with terror and aversion from all other persons. Discerning fowls, it must be confessed!

AGAMEMNON,

brother to Menelaus, was still more unlucky than him. He was elected commander in chief of the Grecian forces engaged in the Trojan war, and the first effect of his superiority was a pre-eminence in misery, being ordered to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia, to remove the displeasure of the gods, who had detained the fleet at Aulis, by contrary winds. (Curious

ideas these ancients entertained of the mode of pleasing the deity.—Unfortunate blindness of human nature!)

I have mentioned elsewhere the manner in which IPHIGENIA was saved, and the Greeks released from AULIS. Things then went on tolerably well till their arrival before Troy, when behold, we find AGAMEMNON in another scrape; for having taken a fancy to BRISEIS, a female captive belonging to ACHILLES, he thought proper to take her away by force from that hero, who thereupon, filled with indignation, retired, as I have already mentioned, from the Grecian league, and left the Trojans to amuse themselves on the heads, legs, and arms of the Greeks, which they did to such purpose, as almost to drive the besiegers to despair.

The death of PATROCLUS having called back ACHILLES to the field, and Troy being reduced, AGAMEMNON returned home, accompanied by CASSANDRA, whom he had received among the number of his prisoners. This unfortunate lady had promised APOLLO to grant him every thing he demanded, provided she received the gift of prophecy in exchange. But no sooner

was she possessed of the knowledge of futurity, than she immediately broke conditions, and refused to pay the price of her acquisition. The enraged divinity, chagrined at being thus outwitted by a female, (what else could he expect?) contrived to render the power he had bestowed upon her of no avail, by making those to whom she uttered her prophetic warnings to consider them as idle ravings. She had foretold to the Trojans all the events of the war, but received no credit whatever. Being now willing to guard AGAMEMNON from the dangers to which he was exposed, she informed him that his wife CLYTEMNESTRA, sister to HELEN, who during his absence had taken a fancy to another gentleman, (ÆGISTHUS) would kill him upon his return. The king, like every one else, disbelieved her, and like every one else, found, when too late, that her predictions were just.

It was the fashion seemingly of those days for ladies who were tired of their husbands to get rid of them by poisoning, throat-cutting, or any other convenient mode; and Madam CLYTEMNESTRA, like

other ladies, wished to be fashionable. Accordingly, when her sovereign lord and master came from the bath, she gave him a robe whose sleeves were sewed together, (a neat contrivance to entangle and confine his arms.) This AGAMEMNON attempted to put on, unconscious of the artifice; and CLYTEMNESTRA finding she had the bird safe in the snare, gave him a gentle salute on the head with a hatchet (she had been used to chop wood, I suppose), which brought him to the earth, and ÆGISTHUS lending his assistance, the poor gentleman took his departure for the other world!

Such was the end of AGAMEMNON, king of kings, and generalissimo of a hundred thousand Greeks!

But I am interrupted, and must resume the subject to-morrow.

LETTER XXI.

Two days have I been prevented from addressing my fair correspondent: at length I have stolen a moment from business, and now devote it to the service of my agreeable pupil.

Let us then return to the Greek and Trojan Chiefs, and begin with

PALAMEDES,

the unfortunate PALAMEDES, at once a warrior and a scholar, to whom the world is supposed to be indebted for four letters of the alphabet, as well as the less useful invention of dice and backgammon, and who is said to have been the first general that marshalled an army in regular form, and established night watches in the camp: he was a Grecian chief, who was deputed by the other confederate princes to

summon ULYSSES to the Trojan war. The crafty Greek (a complete villain by the bye) being much better stocked with good taste than with bravery, very sagaciously preferred the kisses of a young wife, whom he had lately married, to the hard knocks he might chance to meet with from the Trojans; he therefore hit on a scheme to avoid the job to which he had so small an inclination—this was no other than to pretend insanity. He accordingly posted himself behind a plough, and having made deep furrows in the earth, sowed the land with salt instead of seed. PALAMEDES, unfortunately for him, happened to be an old bird, not to be caught with chaff; and matching the cunning of ULYSSES with superior art, laid before him his infant son TELEMACHUS: the father turned aside the ploughshare, and by this act of caution discovered his artifice. Being thus detected, he was under the necessity of joining the league; but he went bearing in his dark breast the bitterest enmity to PALAMEDES, and he too soon found means to gratify his base revenge. He contrived to bribe one of his enemy's servants, whom he honoura-

bly and heroically ordered to bury in the ground, on which his master's tent stood, a very considerable sum of money. ULYSSES then forged in Trojan characters a letter from PRIAM king of Troy, in which that prince appeared to remind PALAMEDES of the promise he had given to betray the Greeks, in consideration of the money he had received. This glorious proof of the wisdom of ULYSSES (for wisdom and knavery seem often synonimous terms with the ancients, and are still considered as such by too many moderns) was conveyed to the other Grecian chiefs. PALAMEDES was tried by a general assembly, and, in spite of his protestations of innocence, put to death; the money found on examining his tent appearing to give but too strong proofs of his guilt!

Great, noble, and illustrious ULYSSES! how well hast thou deserved the title of "the wisest of the Greeks!"

Among the Grecians who helped to knock the walls of Troy about the ears of its inhabitants, let us not forget

STENTOR,

who had such an unmerciful pair of leathern lungs, that the fellow, when he was in the humour, would outbellow fifty of his companions. A charming lad this would have been to assist a young author at the first representation of a new piece, with bravo! bravo! encore! &c.

This gentleman has innumerable descendants in every situation of life; witness his posterity in the House of Commons, his legal children in Westminster Hall, and his less repectable, though not less vociferous, offspring, whom we meet in the public streets under the denominations of newsmen, ballad-singers, and orange-women; to say nothing of that elegant college for Stentorian accomplishments usually styled Billingsgate.

ENEAS,

almost the only Trojan prince of any note who escaped the destruction of the city, was the son of ANCHISES and VENUS. He

behaved with great valour during the siege, encountering DIOMEDES, and even ACHILLES himself. His character is, however, according to some writers, tarnished by an act of horrid treachery, no less than that of admitting the Greeks into the city at night (for the story of the wooden horse is considered as a mere fable), and thus preserving himself and fortunes from the danger that threatened him. It is added, that he was prompted to this by indignation at the little respect paid to him by PRIAM, whose daughter CREUSA he had espoused.

The more general opinion, however, is, that he retired to mount Ida, built a fleet of ships, and set sail in search of a more fortunate country; that after a voyage of seven years, during which he lost two-thirds of his fleet, he arrived in Italy, after having visited Thrace, Sicily, Africa, &c. In Africa he was received by DIDO queen of Carthage, who took a fancy to his handsome phiz, of which partiality the hero did not fail to take advantage, but, like an inconstant beau, left her soon after to continue his voyage. VIRGIL, however, gets him out of this scrape, by maintaining that

he quitted Carthage in obedience to the commands of the gods, who had destined him to reign over Italy. Poor DIDO, not able to survive this affront, killed herself. This, however, is all fiction; for these two personages did not live at the same time, a period of no less than three hundred years lying between them. But to return to ENEAS—he left Carthage, was driven on the coast of Sicily, and proceeded thence to Cumæ in Italy, where the Sybil instructed him how to descend to the subterranean domains, to learn the fates of himself and family. Leaving Cumæ, he at length arrived, according to Virgil, at the mouth of the river Tiber, where he was hospitably received by the king LATINUS, who promised to give his daughter LAVINIA in marriage to the Trojan, although she had already been betrothed by her mother to TURNUS, a prince of the country;—this gentleman not being willing to resign his pretensions, had recourse to the old mode of settling royal disputes, viz. the sword—an argument in which, however, ENEAS happened to be superior; for after a severe war TURNUS was killed. The conqueror married the damsel; and from him, according to VIR-

GIL, the Romans were descended. You will wonder, perhaps, what has become all this time of his poor wife Creusa. But he had disposed very cleverly of her; for on the night when Troy was burnt, he clapped his old daddy Anchises on his shoulders, took his son Ascanius by the hand, and scampered off on full gallop, leaving his unfortunate spousy to follow him as well as she could. The consequence was, the good lady got knocked on the head by a falling house, or dispatched by a Grecian soldier, or, in short, perished by some fate equally agreeable; for Master ENEAS was never troubled with her afterwards—(Virgil indeed makes him return to seek her, distracted at her loss; and adds that her ghost met him, and prophesied his arrival in Italy:) it is generally supposed, however, that the gentleman did not take the circumstance much to heart, but very patiently bore the decrees of the fates. It must at all events be confessed, that he had a most gallant way of conducting himself with respect to his poor wife. However, many modern husbands, it is imagined, would not have acted with much more ceremony.

PRIAM,

the hapless PRIAM, king of the unfortunate Trojans, was perhaps the most miserable of men: in early youth he beheld his father fall a sacrifice to the resentment of HERCULES, who subjugated his native country. Become the parent of a most numerous offspring himself, he saw them fall one by one in the blood-stained fields of TROY, —fields strewed with the remains of his bravest subjects; at length (regretted above them all) his dearest hope, and best defence of his state, the illustrious HECTOR dies before his eyes, and he beholds the corpse trailing in the dust behind the chariot of an insulting foe! This blow broke indeed his heart! every hope, every fear, died in his breast: in frantic despair he rushes towards the Grecian camp; MERCURY, in pity, attends his feeble steps, and protects him from insult, by rendering him invisible: arrived at the tent of ACHILLES, the wretched parent throws himself at his feet—

"Prostrate his children's murderer to implore,
"And kiss the hands yet reeking with their gore!"

The tears, the dignity, and misfortunes of PRIAM, affected even the savage ACHILLES: he gave back to the miserable parent the mangled body of his adored son; and it is with the funeral of the brave and unfortunate HECTOR that HOMER closes his immortal work.

But alas! the black catalogue of miseries did not close here. The Trojan monarch lived to see his capital in flames, his people conquered, his remaining offspring murdered. Despairing, he resolved to expire amidst the universal ruin, and to afford to the Grecian swords yet another breast; but HECUBA, his partner in misfortune, prevailed on him, by her tears and prayers, to remain with her near the altar of JUPITER, a sacred asylum to all but barbarians. Alas! even this sanctuary was destined to float in Trojan blood! PYRRHUS, the cruel, dastardly, ferocious offspring of ACHILLES, rushed into the temple in pursuit of POLITES, one of the few

remaining sons of PRIAM. Wounded to death, the unfortunate youth fell at the feet of his sire, who, filled with unutterable anguish and indescribable indignation, vented the most severe and impassioned invectives on the barbarous Greeks, to whom no sanctuary was sacred. He raised his feeble arm and hurled a spear, which in his hands had once been dreadful, at the assassin of his child. The weapon, cold to its master's wrongs, rang harmless on the shield of PYRRHUS, who, with a savage cruelty, not be equalled by that of the blood-thirsty tyger, sheathed his murderous sword in the aged bosom of the agonised parent!

In spite of the formidable phalanx of writers who have united to celebrate the felicity and virtues of our ancestors, I must confess myself no very ardent admirer of "days of yore." If I may judge by the conduct of the heroes of HOMER, we have improved, not degenerated; for the principles, sentiments, and actions of these heroes, were, generally speaking, such as to bear a very near resemblance to those of the gentlemen who are occasionally sus-

pended from a hempen ligament (vulgarly called a halter) before the door of that venerable building which rears its stupendous walls in the neighbourhood of Smithfield, and which mortals know by the name of Newgate; for meanness, treachery, and violence, theft, rape, adultery, and murder, are the usual characteristics of both, and little difference (except the name) will be found between a classical dictionary and a Newgate calendar.

Innumerable instances may be adduced to prove this assertion; but as the theme is not grateful to the feeling mind, I have omitted the greater part of them: a few only are retained, which assist us in estimating the merit of the most shining characters of antiquity. Among these may be included the adventure of DOLON the Trojan, who, being remarkably swift of foot, was dispatched at night by HECTOR to reconnoitre the enemy's camp. He was met by ULYSSES and DIOMEDES, and threatened with death unless he revealed the schemes of the Trojans. This he did, relying upon their honour to spare his life. The information gained, the two *heroes*

most heroically cut off the poor wretch's head: yet this stain to their honour is not noticed by their historian HOMER, who merely relates it *en passant* as a thing to which no disgrace could attach. Perhaps he even sets it down with the rest of Master ULYSSES' glorious actions, to the score of wisdom; for that seems to be the idea this writer too often attached to every species of artifice, falsehood, and deceit.

This great genius, whom the literary world have generally called the Father of Epic Poetry, existed nearly two thousand eight hundred years ago; and, considering this circumstance, he is perhaps entitled to all the lavish encomiums that have been bestowed upon his works, for their sweetness, fire, and sublimity. During his lifetime he exemplified an observation often made on the fate of great poetical geniuses, it being supposed that he lived in extreme poverty and obscurity;—after his decease, however (rather too late, it must be confessed) his merit became known, and it has been observed that—

"Seven mighty cities claimed great Homer dead,
"Through which, when living, Homer begged his bread."

For the honour of having given birth to this immortal poet was vigorously disputed by the far-famed cities of ATHENS, RHODES, SMYRNA, CHIOS, COLOPHON, SALAMIS, and ARGOS; and it still remains a doubt to which the wreath belongs.

His most celebrated works are the ILIAD and the ODYSSEY; the former of which the celebrated critic LONGINUS compared to the meridian, the latter to the setting sun, which, as Johnson elegantly observes, "remits its splendor, yet retains its magnitude; and pleases more, though it dazzles less."

The ILIAD describes a part of the Trojan war, with the fatal consequences (to the Grecian cause) of ACHILLES' anger, at the loss of BRISEIS, who was torn from his arms (as before mentioned) by AGAMEMNON, chief of the confederacy. The ODYSSEY relates the misfortunes of ULYSSES, when returning to ITHACA, after the destruction of Troy.

The honours that have been paid to HOMER are almost incredible. At CHIOS the inhabitants instituted festivals, which were observed with great solemnity every five years, and during which medals were struck, representing the aged poet placed

upon a throne, and holding in his hands his immortal works. At several places temples were raised to him, and divine honours paid to his memory. All men of learning were intimately acquainted with his writings, whose authority was considered as decisive in all disputes; and even admitted as legal evidence in cases where the boundaries of land were doubtful. We shall be the less surprised at this latter circumstance, when we consider that his descriptions are so extremely accurate, that the spots mentioned in his works are easily recognised, by modern travellers, after a lapse of near three thousand years!

Alexander the Great so highly prized the writings of HOMER, that he generally slept with them under his pillow; and having found among the treasures of DARIUS a most valuable and highly ornamented box, he reserved it for the purpose of containing his HOMER, with the observation that such a casket only ought to hold such a jewel.

For my own part, I think the best use of HOMER's works to a philosophical mind is, to learn from them the customs, manners,

and ideas, of the ancient Greeks; and the progress which civilisation, the arts and sciences had made among them: for, to a reflecting mind, there can be nothing very pleasing in a description of war, bloodshed, and massacres; of the thrusts which one clumsy fellow gives to another with a pike through his breast, or the blows on the head which a second bestows with his sword, of the hacking of shields, the fracture of helmets, or the trampling of horses on the mangled warriors. Seriously speaking, these scenes of human folly, fury, and carnage, are sickening to humanity, and horrible to reflection!

LETTER XXII.

LET us, my fair pupil, once more return to the plains of Troy, whose unfortunate history, by the by, I have not yet given you, except by piecemeal.

This celebrated city, whose melancholy fate is so famous in fabulous history, was called promiscuously DARDANIA, TROY, and ILIUM *, from three of its monarchs, DARDANUS, TROS, and ILUS; at least such is the derivation given by most authors.

The destruction of this city, as I have mentioned elsewhere, was occasioned by the conduct of PARIS in seducing HELEN. The Grecian princes united their forces to avenge the insult, and embarked (according to HOMER and others) near one hundred thousand men, on board above one thousand ships; a number considerably

* Or Ilion.

greater than the small states of Greece could possibly have furnished. According to ancient writers, the Trojan forces, including the Assyrian, Ethiopian, and Thracian allies, were still more numerous. No account is given how these immense armies found subsistence, a circumstance nevertheless of some small importance.

AGAMEMNON, you already know, was the chief of the Grecian army; the operations of which were, however, according to the custom of the ancients, directed by a general council of the leaders.

Many of the towns belonging to the Trojans were taken and plundered before the principal city was attempted.

The operations of the Grecians were, however, retarded considerably by the quarrel I have already alluded to, between ACHILLES and AGAMEMNON. A plague also, which broke out in their camp, carried off vast numbers, and reduced their force very materially. The Trojans, on the other hand, suffered very heavy checks, losing their most valiant leaders, particularly those of the family of PRIAM.

About 1270 years before the birth of

Christ, the siege was terminated, after having lasted ten years, by a contrivance so strange and inconceivable, as to render the truth of it extremely suspicious. This was no other than by building a huge horse of wood, which they pretended was an offering to the Gods :—but which in reality was hollow, and filled with Greeks, the remainder of whom then appeared to retreat, and give up the siege.

The Trojans, infatuated and undone, foolishly drew the horse into the city, through a breach purposely made in the walls, as a trophy of their supposed victory, notwithstanding the remonstrances of

LAOCOON,

a priest of APOLLO, who foretold the evils which would result from their conduct. For this friendly admonition, the deities who were inimical to Troy sent a brace of horrid serpents, who made a comfortable meal of his sons, and when he flew to their assistance finished the tragedy, by wreathing their enormous folds round his body, and stinging him to death.

One of the finest specimens of antique sculpture is a statue of LAOCOON, and his two sons, under the fangs of the serpents. The execution and expression of this celebrated instance of human genius are almost beyond praise, yet, in some instances, it has been very severely, yet justly, criticised.

But to return to Troy.—

The Grecians concealed in the body of the horse came from their hiding-place in the night, and introduced their companions (who had privately returned) into the ill-fated town, which was then given up to fire, slaughter, and plunder. Most of the inhabitants were put to the sword, the rest carried into captivity, and the city reduced to ashes.

This account of the taking of Troy with the wooden horse, however, is denied by many authors, who maintain that the city was lost by the treachery of ANTENOR and ENEAS, who let the enemy into the town by night.

Some time after the destruction of TROY a new city was raised, which bore the same name; but though countenanced in

the age of ALEXANDER the Great by that ambitious monarch, who made the town very handsome presents, yet it never rose to any degree of eminence.

Some persons have supposed that JULIUS CÆSAR, who traced his descent from ENEAS, had once an intention of removing the seat of empire from ROME to TROY, and that AUGUSTUS had entertained a similar idea. Both these princes, however, were far better politicians than these good gentlemen supposed, and would certainly never have attempted so imprudent an alteration.

The great length of time taken up in the siege of this celebrated city has often excited animadversion. For my own part, I don't think ten years so much to decide the fate of a great empire. It is but a third part of the time often occupied by the moderns in a common Chancery suit.

I have before given you the history of the gentlemen particularly mentioned by Homer; let us now turn our attention to the ladies:—foremost, among these, we must notice the beauteous but fatal cause of the Trojan war, viz.

HELEN *,

who was the sister of CASTOR, POLLUX, and CLYTEMNESTRA. She was celebrated all over Greece, at a very early age, for her incredible beauty, which was so extraordinary, that before she had attained her tenth year she was carried off by THESEUS and PIRITHOUS; her brothers CASTOR and POLLUX, however, recovered her, and brought her back to SPARTA. Her charms became more brilliant and more renowned every day, and almost all the princes of Greece solicited her hand. I have already informed you, that ULYSSES contrived to settle all difficulties,—that she was married to MENELAUS,—and what a pretty trick she played him. According to some writers she was not satisfied with one piece of treachery, but was no sooner arrived in Troy than she began to change sides, and discover to the Greeks all the projects of their enemies. They charge her too with

* Her name, according to etymologists, signifies a loose woman, and was probably acquired by her adventures with PARIS, &c.

betraying her second husband, DEIPHOBUS, (whom she married after the death of PARIS,) by introducing her old one, MENELAUS, into his chamber, the night Troy was burnt, by whom the youth was immediately assassinated, after being cruelly mangled.

These last accusations, however, seem to be ill-founded; the best historians asserting that she never entered the walls of Troy: for they say that a storm having driven the ship in which she and her paramour embarked upon the coast of Egypt, the king of that country detained her as a prisoner, and sent off PARIS with every mark of indignation, as a villainous seducer. So that the Grecians, after ten years fighting, had the satisfaction to discover that they had cut the throats of the Trojans, and knocked their town about the ears of its inhabitants; to recover a good for nothing hussy, whom the poor Phrygians had never beheld!—They add that MENELAUS, on his return, stopped at Egypt, and regained his lady, with whom he returned to SPARTA, forgetting all his injuries. After her husband's death, Madam HELEN was expelled her

country by his illegitimate sons, and retired to the dominions of a lady, whose husband had fallen in the Trojan war, and who had secretly determined to revenge her loss upon the cause of that terrible contest. She accordingly disguised some of her attendants as furies, who seized on the unhappy fair-one as she was bathing, and strangled her, after tying her to a tree. An unpleasant exit, you will exclaim, for a beauty! Alas! were all fair-ones to be as roughly handled for a *faux pas*, the price of hemp would be vastly enhanced.

She had afterwards divine honours paid to her name, and one of her temples in particular was supposed to confer beauty on all deformed females who entered it. Oh Heavens! how would such a temple be crowded from morn till night in modern Europe!

The story of

IPHIGENIA,

daughter of AGAMEMNON, is a strong proof of the barbarity of the ancients, and the idea they entertained of superior beings.

The Grecian fleet going to invade Troy being detained at AULIS by adverse winds, CALCHAS, the soothsayer, (these gentlemen were always fond of mischief), declared, that AGAMEMNON having killed the favourite stag of DIANA, his daughter must be sacrificed to the Goddess, to render her propitious. The parent, indignant at the proposition, would willingly have substituted the priest for the victim; but the Grecian chiefs, particularly master ULYSSES, whose eloquence, as it is called, seems to have been generally employed on some villainous occasion, prevailed on the king to submit to what they styled the will of the Gods. Poor IPHIGENIA was accordingly sent for, on pretence of being married to ACHILLES; but, on her arrival at AULIS, instead of a handsome young husband ready to embrace her with transport, she found a villainous old priest prepared to butcher her. Her death, in spite of her parents' fondness, would have been inevitable, had not DIANA herself snatched her from the altar, and carried her to *Taurica*, where she was made priestess to the Goddess. In this post she was, how-

ever, commanded to sacrifice every stranger who entered the country. After she had performed the horrid duties of her office for some time, PYLADES and ORESTES arrived at TAURICA, and were condemned to the usual punishment. Learning, however, that they were Greeks, IPHIGENIA, anxious to receive intelligence from her native country, offered to spare the life of one of these inseparable friends, whose amity has become proverbial, on condition he would deliver some letters to her relations in Greece. Here arose a most affecting struggle between the two heroes, each importuning the other to accept the offer, and save a life more valuable to them than their own. At length PYLADES was conquered, and receiving the letters, found them to be directed to ORESTES, who, on enquiry, proved to be the brother of IPHIGENIA, by whom he had not been seen for many years. This discovery entirely changed the face of affairs, and the priestess joined her brother and his friend in a plan to escape from TAURICA, and carry with them the statue of DIANA.

By this story we see that the practice of

offering human victims to their fabulous deities was very common in those days; yet these are the times which writers, in general, hold up to our admiration, as the golden ages of the world.

Another celebrated female demands our attention, viz. the illustrious

PENELOPE,

the wife of Ulysses.

HOMER being (like other poets) fond of fiction, has painted this lady as the very pattern of purity; for according to him she was plagued by an immense number of suitors, who, during her husband's long absence, tormented her to marry one of them, as they wished to persuade her that ULYSSES was gone "to that country, from whose bourne no traveller returns;" and who at length became so pressing, that she promised to make a new choice, as soon as she had finished a piece of tapestry, on which she was then at work; to delay which period she unpicked, during the night, all the work which she had done in the day.

Such is the account of the poets. Others, who are more partial to probability, declare that Madam PENELOPE was far from being inconsolable for the absence of her husband, and that she only protracted the period of choosing *one* of her suitors because she thought the admiration of *all* much more pleasing, and that she even produced a small proof of the accuracy of this account, who was afterwards named PAN, or *all*, because she was unable to give the credit of it to any one favourite in particular.

Which of these two accounts is most to be depended upon I shall not pretend to determine. I always wish to put the most favourable interpretation on every thing, and have therefore only to add, that however wonderful the rigid virtue of the illustrious ENELOPE may appear to modern damsels, it yet seems to me to be within the limits of *possibility* at least—I had almost said of *probability*.

At this impertinent sentence, methinks I see my elegant epistle thrown into the fire. I dare not, therefore, add another line to this tedious scrawl, and the remain-

der of my heroes and heroines must of course be deferred till my next.

Adieu! my fair friend!—If you can possibly exert so much charity, pardon your saucy, but devoted,

&c. &c.

LETTER XXIII.

WHAT! yet another letter, say you?—Yes, my amiable pupil—I am continually enlarging the limits I had originally proposed to myself; but I cannot resist the temptation of making you acquainted with a few more ancient personages, whose history has descended to us, embellished with extraordinary circumstances. To plunge then at once into the stream, turn your attention to the illustrious

ZOROASTER:

He was one of the earliest lawgivers, philosophers, and monarchs of BACTRIA, and is supposed to have founded (or with more probability to have revived and extended) the society of the MAGI, a race of philosophers and priests, who had almost absolute power in Persia, and other eastern countries, and whose intimate knowledge

of the operations of nature was such, as led to the supposition of their using supernatural arts, whence has arisen the word *magic*. There is great reason to believe that the MAGI were the very same race of men with our DRUIDS, whose customs, rites, and opinions, were similar in a vast variety of instances. Even the charge made against the former of worshipping fire tends to prove this; for the British DRUIDS, like the MAGI, paid the most profound respect to the Sun, as the most fit symbol and representative of the Supreme; and *Sun*-day, or the day of *Ap-huil* (APOLLO, or the Sun) was the day of religious observance ages before the introduction of Christianity. Innumerable Persian words are also to be found in the Celtic or druidical language.

But to return to ZOROASTER:—this philosopher is supposed by some authors to be an imaginary being, an idea which they support by an analysis of his name, which, according to them, signifies the Sun—"*Zoraster*"—"*Sun-Star* *," and that, therefore, the doctrines given out as the production

* Or *great Star.*

of a legislator are, in fact, the work of the priests of the Sun.

Be that as it may, those doctrines still exist after a lapse of many ages, and are, at present, the fundamental principles of religious belief to thousands in India and Persia.

ABARIS

was a Scythian priest of APOLLO, who is said by some to have made the PALLADIUM of Troy, with the bones of PELOPS. He is supposed to have been endued with the gift of prophecy by the deity he served, who likewise made him a present of an arrow, upon which he was conveyed through the air, to any part of the world he pleased. A mighty convenient mode of travelling, it must be confessed! It would be infinitely serviceable to a king's messenger on a long journey; to an anxious lover on the road to his mistress; or to a young beauty going to a ball on a birth-night.

ADONIS

is a name so frequently used to signify a youth particularly handsome, that I think it must before now have met your ear. He was the favoured lover of Venus, who often cautioned him not to indulge too much in the pleasures of the chase, to which he was ardently attached. Like other young men, he neglected good advice, and died of a wound, which he received from the tusks of a wild boar. His beauteous mistress bewailed his loss, and changed him into the flower, now called *Anemone*. Festivals were instituted in honour of his memory in many parts of Greece and Egypt. This piece of mythology has given rise to many charming exertions of poetical talent, and is also the subject of some beautiful paintings, both by modern and ancient artists.

They say that every one has his peculiar taste; certainly no man can pretend to judge for another, but I cannot help thinking, that had I been in the situation of ADONIS, I should have preferred the company of the

charming VENUS to the pleasure of scampering through a forest after a bristly-backed, ugly beast of a boar, especially if he happened to wear a couple of pretty little tusks, of half a yard in length, which he might take a fancy to employ on my handsome person.

MARSYAS

was an unfortunate swain, who got his skin stripped over his ears, for imagining that he was an admirable musician. He challenged APOLLO upon the flute, and agreed that the conqueror should be at liberty to flay the vanquished—(an awkward kind of a wager.) Poor MARSYAS lost the day, and APOLLO (rather cruelly, in my opinion) acted the part of a Mohawk Indian, and whipped off the skin of the unlucky piper.

Alas! alas! were every one who was possessed of as much vanity to be served in the same manner, what a number of poor fellows would be smarting without their skins, who are now very warm and comfortable in them.

TARPEIA*,

the daughter of TARPEIUS, a governor of Rome, during its wars with the Sabines, had rather a singular and somewhat rough death, for a lady; and is an instance of the danger of making a bargain, without being very express in the conditions.

This damsel, when Rome was besieged, contrived to open a negociation with the chief of the Sabines, and, at length, agreed to let him and his troops into the town, by night, provided they would give her "what they carried on their left arms." By this she meant the bracelets of gold which the Sabines wore on the same arm which bore their shields. (You see the ladies will long for finery!)—The treaty being concluded, the enemy were entering the gates, when TATIUS, their commander, more than fulfilled the agreement he had made, by

* Tarpeia was buried in the Capitolian hill, which was thence called, in memory of her death, "The Tarpeian rock."

throwing on the traitress his *shield* as well as his *bracelet;* which example was followed by all his soldiers, very little to the satisfaction of TARPEIA, who soon sunk under the weight of her un-wished-for presents, and expiated her crime by expiring beneath the load of "*what the Sabines carried on their left arms!*"

Among the names of the constellations, (Appendix) with which the ancients contrived to fill up the azure fields of Heaven, you have doubtless noticed that remarkable one usually known by the name of ORION, or the Hunter;—this cluster of stars took its appellation from

ORION,

a celebrated giant, of whose exploits many contradictory accounts are given. According to the best authorities, he became enamoured of HERO, the daughter of ŒNOPION, prince of CHIOS, who promised him the lady's hand, if he cleared his territories of wild beasts. This, ORION, who was an admirable hunter, easily performed; but ŒNOPION, who had no fancy to his intended

son-in-law, put out his eyes as he slept on the sea-shore. ORION awaking, directed his steps to a forge, the sound of which he heard near him, and taking one of the workmen with him as a guide, repaired to a spot whence the rising sun might be distinctly seen. Here invoking the Gods to assist him, he immediately recovered his sight.

AURORA and DIANA have both been supposed to have been enamoured of this strapping youth, who is, by some authors, imagined to have fallen a sacrifice to their mutual jealousy, while others maintain that he was the cause of his own death, by boasting that there did not exist upon the earth an animal he could not subdue; an assertion which TERRA (the earth) immediately punished, by means of a scorpion, whose fatal poison put a speedy period to the existence of the giant.

ORION married a nymph called SIDA, who was packed off to the regions below, because she supposed herself more beautiful than JUNO. This seems to have been rather a presumptuous family:—one would have thought, that the fate of his spousey would have kept ORION's tongue quiet, and

have induced him to keep to himself the exalted opinion he might entertain of his own prowess.

This gentleman giant had two daughters, who followed their papa into the skies, where they now twinkle, in the form of a crown. These fair-ones were great favourites among the Goddesses, particularly with MINERVA, DIANA, and VENUS; and they delivered their countrymen from a terrible plague, at so dear a rate as fairly entitled them to a good situation aloft; for the oracle having been consulted as to what steps should be taken to gid rid of the pestilence, replied, that two of the daughters of JUPITER must be sacrificed to the Gods.—The daughters of ORION were of the number of those who called the monarch of Olympus grandpapa, and being determined to devote themselves for the good of their country, they voluntarily offered up their lives, as an atonement to the offended deities.—This patriotic act struck all the divinities with admiration; and two stars instantly sprung from their blood, and ascended to the skies, where they still spar-

kle away in a grand style of nocturnal splendour!

As I do not conceive it possible to terminate a letter to a lady better than by an instance of female heroism and patriotism, I shall, for the present, lay down my worn-out pen, and to-morrow resume it in the service of my fair pupil.

LETTER XXIV.

Pray, my dear *****, have I ever informed you, that the ancients considered horns as an emblem of power and authority? This singular idea certainly existed very generally among our ancestors; and as a proof of it, we find that many of their deities, particularly Pan, and the other silvan divinities, were adorned with them. This has been supposed by some to be an allusion to the animals over whom they reigned; but the idea will appear to be erroneous, when we consider, that all the river Gods wore them, who have nothing to do with beasts.

I am even inclined to think, that crowns were originally an imitation of horns, as the ancient ones had but very few rays, or points, and those rays likewise bore a rude resemblance to the natural emblems of sovereignty, which threaten on the majestic

forehead of the bull. This last supposition, however, is merely hazarded *en passant*, as I never bestowed any longer consideration on the subject than while I have been scribbling this sentence. That horns, however, were generally supposed to be symbols of power and authority is beyond all doubt, and we have a singular instance of it, in the story of

CIPPUS,

the Roman general, who returning triumphant from combating the enemies of his country, happened to cast his eyes on a stream, where he beheld his own image, and was much surprised to perceive two small horns growing from his forehead (by his astonishment, I suppose he was unmarried.) He immediately consulted the augurs, who informed him that his new ornaments prognosticated the possession of sovereign power; and that if he once entered the walls of Rome, he would inevitably reign over it. The patriotic Roman instantly desired the attendance of the senate, &c. without the city, on business of the

first importance, and having stated the matter to them, declared his abhorrence at the impious thought of becoming a tyrant to his fellow citizens, and amidst the applauses of his countrymen went into a voluntary banishment from Rome.

This gentleman had, it seems, a very different taste from modern victors, to whom the walls of a city would only prove the strongest and most agreeable invitation, and who, indeed, seldom stand in need of any invitation at all, to enter towns, and reign over them too; and who will frequently knock the city about the heads of the poor inhabitants, and cut their throats into the bargain, if any resistance is made to their entering, without any other request than their own inclinations, or any other right than their sovereign and mighty wills.

But away with conquerors! let us turn to the poets.

ÆSCHINES,

a celebrated Grecian poet and warrior, had a very singular fate.—As he sat in the fields near his house, an eagle flew over his head, with a tortoise in ner talons. Mistaking

the good old gentleman's bald pate for a stone, she thought it would be a good plan to let her thick-shelled prey fall upon it, that by cracking his case she might have an opportunity of making a hearty meal, which she would otherwise have been somewhat puzzled to have got at.—No sooner thought than done—down came the tortoise, pounce on poor ÆSCHINES' nob; but instead of cracking the creature's shell, it broke the poor fellow's pericranium, and he fell an instant sacrifice to the blunder of the eagle.—An unlucky fate for a poet.—However, I would not therefore have the rest of the tribe be afraid of uncovering their heads, lest they should share his fate. To a great proportion of them, a similar blow would not prove in the smallest degree injurious.

Another curious fable is that of

EPIMINEDES,

an epic poet of Creta, who, while tending his flocks one day, found himself overpowered by the heat of the sun, and entered a cave, where he soon fell asleep.

His slumber lasted, according to tradition, *only* fifty-seven years—a pretty decent nap, you will say! So it will, perhaps, appear to many moderns, who might, however, indulge themselves (if it were possible) in a similar manner, without the want of their presence and exertions, being much perceived or regretted by the world in general.

DEDALUS,

an artist of ATHENS, is held up to the admiration of mankind, by the fabulists, as the greatest of mechanics; and innumerable buildings and other monuments of ingenuity are ascribed to him by a variety of authors. He is said to have been the first who made an automaton or statue, which by means of hidden mechanism seemed to be animated, and to move of itself. To him also the discovery of sails is ascribed, as well as that of the wedge, and some other mechanical instruments. TALUS, his nephew, seemed to be endued with a genius equal to his own, and the invention of the saw, the compasses, &c. gave DEDA-

LUS such reason to apprehend a rival in the youth, that instigated by the demon of jealousy, he threw him down from a window, and thus put an end to his existence.

In consequence of this atrocious murder, DEDALUS, with his son ICARIUS, fled from Athens, and are fabled to have flown through the air on wings which the father had fabricated, but that ICARIUS rising too high, approached so near the sun, that its heat melted the wax with which the feathers of his pinions were connected together, and he fell into the ocean, in that part since called the Icarian sea.

This fable must have arisen from his inventing sails, which at a distance might pass for wings.

I fear DEDALUS is not the only genius who would serve his rival *a la* TALUS.

DRACO,

the celebrated Athenian lawgiver is, remarkable for peculiarities in his character, and also for the singular manner of his death. This stern philosopher, while he

exercised the high office of ARCHON, or principal magistrate of the city, promulgated a body of laws, which were afterwards all abolished, by his wiser and more mild successor, SOLON; it having been justly observed, that the laws of DRACO were written in letters of blood*. But to return to the legislator.——An Athenian having asked the cause of his extreme severity, and why in his code death appeared a general punishment for all crimes, he replied, that to him the loss of life seemed but an adequate punishment for the *smallest* offence, and that he was unable to inflict a greater for the most atrocious: an answer which condemned himself, and evidently proved his system to be erroneous; for when men (as judge Blackstone, I think,

* By the laws of DRACO idleness was punished with death, and the penalty of murder was no more. SOLON wisely abolished such a system; and of all the severe ordinances of his predecessor, retained only that which condemned him, who had deprived another of life to lose his own.

Alas! were the laws of DRACO, with respect to industry, to be revived, the population of the country would suffer more than by a ten years' war, or a pestilence.

justly observes) find no distinction in the punishment of two crimes, they will see little difference in the moral turpitude of them, and will therefore as readily commit the one as the other.

Notwithstanding the strictness of his legal code, however, DRACO was very much revered by his fellow-citizens, and happening once to appear at the theatre, they threw their garments on him in token of approbation (a common mode at Athens of testifying respect); and so great was the number of his admirers, that the good gentleman was smothered under his honours, and actually perished through his extreme popularity. A curious fate for a statesman, and which I am apt to think would not happen (at least from the same cause) to any premier of modern times. For my own part, I should not be extremely fond of such tokens of esteem, and indeed I am inclined to suspect, that the Athenians were tired of the strict laws of the venerable old gentleman,* and took special care

* Some authors have supposed DRACO to be not a personal appellation, but a title of office, *Drac* or *Drag*, in-

not to be too parsimonious in their expressions of veneration. Perhaps a few of them might have clapped on an additional doublet or two, on purpose to do him sufficient honor.

HERMOTIMUS

was a renowned prophet, who however, wise as he was, had not prudence enough to conceal a secret of some importance from his wife, and accordingly suffered somewhat severely for it. This secret was no other, than that his soul occasionally separated itself from his body, and amused itself with a ramble half over the world, after which it returned to rejoin its corporeal partner. His spousy treasured up this discovery in her breast; and thinking a husband dead was a plague got rid of, (an opinion in which it is supposed she was not perfectly *unique*) watched her opportunity, and the next time the good gentleman's soul had set out on its usual jaunt,

the Celtic (from which the Greek was in all probability derived) signifying a judge, a magistrate, or legislator.

she gave out, with many tears and lamentations, that her *dear* husband was dead, and accordingly took special care that his body should be burnt on the funeral pile, so that poor HERMOTIMUS' spirit found on its return, to its great surprise, that its earthly mansion was disposed of, and so was obliged to betake itself to the banks of the Styx.

This unlucky gentleman had a temple built to him at Clazomene, where he received the honours due to a divinity, and from which ladies were totally excluded; by way of revenge for the trick his wife played him, which it must be confessed was rather beyond a joke!

LEANDER

was a young man of ABYDOS, a city of Asia, which stands opposite to SESTOS, in Europe, the two towns being separated by the Hellespont, whose waves the daring youth braved every night, to reach the temple of VENUS, to whose priestess (the beautiful HERO) he was devotedly attached. Her love was no less tender than his, and

mounted on a high tower, with a flaming torch in her hand, she guided her faithful lover to her arms. One fatal night a storm arose, yet the terrors of the tempest could not daunt the intrepid breast of the enamoured LEANDER; he resolutely plunged into the foaming waves, whose white froth beat over his broad manly breast; with vigorous arms he buffets the opposing tide, but, alas! his strength begins to fail—the moon, lost in dark heavy clouds, seems to mourn his approaching fate. In vain the love-lorn HERO climbs the tower's height; the loud winds howl around her, and her dishevelled hair floats in the blast. In vain she raises her voice, and distractedly calls upon her LEANDER--the tempest that roars around drives from his dying ears the much loved sounds of her whom he adores.—Despairing, he still struggles amidst the the mountainous waves; at length he wears the shores of SESTOS; hope seems to reanimate his almost exhausted bosom, but, ah! a tremendous sea rolling towards him, drives him back from land, and in deafening thunders rushes over his head! He sinks, again emerges, struggles, sinks for

ever!—The wretched HERO screams, and precipitated from the tower, enjoys the only consolation left her, that of sharing in his fate!

As I think I have nearly exhausted the list of personages whom I wished to introduce to your notice, I shall for the present terminate my letters on the subject; and intend in my next scribble to commence a a short account of some of the most remarkable festivals, customs, temples, &c. of the ancients, all of which are closely connected with mythology. I must now, therefore, bid adieu to my amiable friend, till the ensuing week, when I shall resume my pleasing employment.

LETTER XXV.

Once more, my fair friend, I have the pleasure of addressing you, and in compliance with the promise which concluded my last, shall begin with the temples where the oracles of the Gods were usually delivered.

These temples were in general (thanks to the folly and credulity of mankind) immensely rich; but above all, that of

DELPHOS,

sacred to Apollo, was filled with the greatest treasures. Of the vast amount of these, some idea may be formed, when we learn, that at one time Nero took from it five hundred statues of brass, and that at another, the wealth of which it was despoiled during the sacred war, enabled the plunderers to sustain the expence of a most vi-

gorous, extensive, and sanguinary contest for many years.

This temple was supposed by the ancients to be in the middle of the world, and it was thence called *terra umbillicus*, or the earth's navel. They maintained that JUPITER let fly two doves from the extremities of the globe, and that they met precisely where the temple afterwards stood.

The oracles at this place were originally delivered in verse, but this was afterwards changed to plain prose, it having been observed, that Apollo, the God of poets, was the most horrible rhymester that ever tagged a couplet. A sentence which must have been dictated by the strictest justice, otherwise they would not have ventured to have spoken so cavalierly of a deity.

If the temple of Delphos was imagined to be the richest, that of

DODONA,

dedicated to JUPITER, was supposed to be the most ancient in the world, and was reported to have been built by DEUCALION,

immediately after the deluge. An oracle was established here for many ages, and according to HEREDOTUS it commenced in the following manner:—Two black doves flew from Thebes in Egypt, one of which directed its course to the spot on which the temple of JUPITER AMMON was afterwards built: the other to DODONA, and there proclaimed with the voice of a man, that JUPITER would in future give oracles in those places, which he had been pleased to consecrate to himself. Now the Greek word, which expresses a dove, also signifies an old woman, and it is therefore supposed that this fable means no more, than that two priestesses, or old Sybils, went from Egypt to reside at the temples above mentioned, where they thenceforward gave oracles to the inhabitants. The manner in which these oracles were given was various. At one period the priests explained the will of JUPITER by listening to the sounds made by certain brazen vessels, which were placed so near to each other, that one being struck communicated its vibration to all the rest. At another time the murmurs of the celebrated fountain which flowed

within the forest, were imagined to convey the answers of the divinity. This fountain, though cold, would light a torch placed near its surface, and flowed in a very singular manner, being full at night, dry at noon, and rising and falling alternately during the intermediate hours.

The very trees of the forest, and the doves that built their nests in the branches, were supposed to possess an oracular power; whence the argonauts were fabled to receive directions in all cases of difficulty from their vessel, which had in it some beams cut from the trees of DODONA.

JUPITER had another temple in the desarts of Lybia, where he was worshipped under the name of JUPITER AMMON or "*Jupiter the sandy.*" According to mythologists, BACCHUS with his army being reduced to the last extremity for want of water, in the desarts of Africa, his father JUPITER appeared to him under the shape of a ram, and shewed him a luxurious fountain. BACCHUS upon this raised him the temple above mentioned, where JUPITER was represented with the horns of a ram.—As usual, the temple gave rise to

an oracle, which was much celebrated, and often consulted by the heroes of old times; such as THESEUS, HERCULES, &c. but when in servile flattery to ALEXANDER it declared him to be the son of JUPITER AMMON, its reputation instantly decayed; the rest of the world, however willing to believe any absurdity in their own favour, being much too clear-sighted to be cajoled where another was concerned.

Were oracles still in fashion, I have very little doubt, they would prove quite as complying as that of Ammon, and, ten to one, not contented with making a Charles, a Frederick, or a Bonaparte the son of Jupiter, they would declare him to be the thunderer himself in a human form.

Among the immense number of temples in which the ancients paid homage to the creatures of their brains, I have already mentioned those of DELPHOS, DODONA, and LYBIA. Two others are particularly deserving of notice, viz. those of COMMANA and EPHESUS.

The temple of COMMANA dedicated to that amiable damsel Mademoiselle BELLONA, contained no less than 6000 priests:

great as this number seems, we beat them out of the field, for in this *little* island of *Great Britain* we have not much less than half a million of priests, in red and blue, devoted to the service of Lady BELLONA, and her amiable cut and thrust brother Mr. MARS.

That of DIANA of EPHESUS was so vast and magnificent a structure, as to be reckoned one of the seven wonders of the world; it was in length four hundred and twenty-five feet, and in breadth two hundred; one hundred and twenty-seven columns, sixty feet in height, supported its immense roof. It was supposed that the building was not entirely completed till the expiration of two hundred and twenty years from its commencement. This celebrated temple was burnt on the very night Alexander * was born, by an Ephesian of a most

* The flatterers of the day observed, that DIANA was too much engaged in attending to the birth of this hero, to take any notice of the destruction of her temple; and, perhaps, this compliment might occasion Alexander afterwards to offer to rebuild it; an offer which the Ephesians declined; answering, like true courtiers, that one deity ought not to raise temples to another.

singular taste, called EROSTATUS. He set fire to it, not from any particular *penchant* for burning, but merely destroyed this splendid structure, that his name might be known to all posterity, if not for the good he had done, at least for the evil.

Many of our modern generals, and illustrious conquerors, seem to be inspired with the same passion as Erostatus, from their great inclination for burning and destroying of both temples and towns; and seemingly from the very same motive.

But *a propos*—While I am running over the names of the gentry to whom the ancients paid veneration, and the temples in which they were adored, I have forgotten to mention the priests who conducted their worship. These were immensely numerous. One class of them in particular are extremely well known to the moderns, viz.

THE AUGURS,

certain priests at Rome, to whose predictions much credit was given, and who

pretended to foretell future events by the view of the heavens, thunder and lightning, clouds, beasts, accidents, &c.

These gentlemen inspired the Romans with a thousand ridiculous superstitions*. Yet the ancients did not come near us in these matters. They, at the worst of times, had only fifteen persons who were authorized to make idiots of others, while with us, every old woman is an augur or expounder of omens; and by the grounds of coffee, the spilling of salt, or the howling of dogs, can foretell the intentions of the Supreme with the utmost certainty. Seriouly speaking, is it not shocking, that beings calling themselves rational and religious, should insult the majesty of him who guides and governs ten thousand worlds, by supposing that his high and sacred decrees, are to be looked into and explained by such trifling and ridiculous arts; and that the secrets of his breast are open to the view of every old gossip who chooses to inspect the grounds of a dish of coffee?

* Cicero used to say, he was surprised that two augurs could possibly meet each other in the street without laughing.

Along with the Augurs we may rank the PYTHIA, priestesses of APOLLO, who delivered his oracles. The Sybils were of the same race;—one of them came to Rome, and offered nine books to the king for an enormous sum. These books contained their prophecies. He thought the price extravagant, and refused. She burnt three, and demanded the same for the rest. On a second refusal she consumed three more, without lowering her tone. At length the prince, fearful the whole of such a treasure should be lost, paid for the remaining three what had been demanded for the whole.— I fancy our modern monopolizers proceed on the Sybilline principle!—

These books were kept by the Roman priests, and consulted on all important occasions;—you need not doubt they always gave such replies as the reverend gentlemen pleased.

THE CORYBANTES

were priests of CYBELE, who, during their religious ceremonies, used to beat drums, cymbals, &c. in so furious a manner, and

make such a hideous noise, as to appear actually delirious. When JUPITER was born, his mother ordered them to keep up this dim incessantly, to prevent his infant cries from reaching the ears of SATURN; who, as I have already mentioned, devoured all his children except JUPITER, NEPTUNE, PLUTO, and JUNO, who were concealed by their mother, while Saturn was persuaded that she had miscarried, or brought forth an animal, a stone, &c.

Festivals, called CORYBANTICA, were instituted in Creta (the island where JUPITER was brought up) in commemoration of this artifice.

This contrivance of CYBELE, shews that she was but little acquainted with her own sex, otherwise she might have saved all this trouble, by just setting a dozen females a gossiping round the cradle, and the little JUPITER might have squalled as loud as he pleased, without the least danger of detection.

I have already mentioned the priests of BELLONA, and their agreeable worship.—To these might be added the FLAMENS and other gentry of the same class. But let us

quit these impostors. It is a pity that their number is at all times too great, and that the superstitions of mankind so much prevail over the pure principles of rational religion.

As human nature is ever anxious to obtain more knowledge than Providence has been pleased to bestow, it will not be surprising that men soon endeavoured to learn the secrets of futurity, by applications to the numerous imaginary deities I have described to you. From these applications arose the ORACLES, once so famous and revered:—these were answers given at the temples of the Gods, by priests or priestesses, who sitting upon tripods, (a kind of three legged stool) and pretending to be agitated and inspired, delivered to their credulous applicants the supposed will of the divinities. These answers were generally couched in such obscure and mysterious language, as to be equally applicable to a variety of events, and thus to encrease the probability of their proving correct. For example, the celebrated oracle which commanded NERO to beware of seventy-three, was supposed to be verified, when GALBA

in his seventy-third year dethroned him, but the same credit would have been given to the oracle, had Nero died a natural death at the age of seventy-three: an age which carries off great numbers. Or on the other hand, had seventy-three persons conspired against him—had he been dethroned on the seventy-third day of the year—had any accident happened to him seventy-three miles from his capital city, &c. &c.

Among other ———

I am broken in upon, and must terminate this elegant epistle sooner than I intended. I will, however, (if possible) resume the pen to-morrow, and glance over a variety of miscellaneous subjects, which I hope will conclude our mythological correspondence, of which I fear you begin to be tired.

Adieu, dear * * *,

&c. &c.

LETTER XXVI.

I HASTEN, my dear pupil, to conclude our mythological letters, which have really been extended to an unconscionable length. Fortunately for your patience, however, I have but a few miscellaneous points to touch upon. Among these, do not let us forget the celebrated

MOUNT OLYMPUS,*

which was the spot where JUPITER has been always supposed by the poets to hold his Court. It has accordingly been endowed with singular privileges; such as

* This name may be reasonably supposed to be derived from the Celtic *Ol-imp*, or hill of spirits.

an exemption from winds, clouds, and rain. An eternal spring was supposed to flourish on its summit, which, it was imagined, reached to the very heavens. The plain truth of the matter, when robbed of all this fine colouring, is, that OLYMPUS is a mountain of Macedonia, covered with grottoes and woods, with an elevation of about a mile, or a mile and a half at the utmost, which is considerably less than that of ETNA or the ALPS.

The Olympic games so often alluded to in literature, were festivals celebrated every four years in Greece, where men, and even occasionally women, contended for prizes in the chariot race; there were also contests in leaping and running, as well as in the fine arts, poetry, eloquence, &c. These games were considered as matters of the first importance: the victors were crowned with olive, returned home in triumph, drawn in a chariot by four horses, and were received with as much respect, and as many demonstrations of joy, as a victorious general. Even the walls of a city were broken down, to make way for them; and the talents of the greatest poets, painters, and

statuaries were employed in perpetuating their renown.

In those contests which depended on personal strength and agility, the combatants were completely adamites, a circumstance which did not prevent their having innumerable spectators from every part of Greece. But the ancients did not mind trifles.

These festivals were celebrated near Olympia, a town of Elis, where a most magnificent temple dedicated to Jupiter was erected, in which stood one of the seven wonders of the world, viz. the statue of that God, made by the famous sculptor Phidias, and reckoned the best of all his productions. This *chef-d'œuvre* was 50 cubits high, and it is said to have been so highly esteemed, that the people of Elis bestowed upon the family of the artist, as the most honourable distinction they could conceive, the post of guardians or preservers of this noble effort of genius. They were maintained at the public expence, and their only duty was to preserve it from every injury, and take care it was kept perfectly clean. It is supposed that

the production of this beautiful statue was the effect of pique. PHIDIAS having been banished from Athens, for taking the liberty to introduce the figures of PERICLES and himself on the shield of the celebrated MINERVA*, which he had made for that city; the artist determined to be revenged by outdoing his own performance, in which he is said to have succeeded so well, that his Olympic JUPITER perfectly eclipsed the Athenian MINERVA.

By the bye, it seems rather a severe punishment on a man of genius, to be expelled from his native city for a little natural and harmless vanity: but the Athenians were very haughty gentlemen themselves; and you will observe, that pride is ever regarded with most hatred by those who possess the largest portion of it.

But let us return to the games——

The space where the foot and chariot races were run was called the stadium,

* We have a very brilliant proof of the immense wealth of Athens in this statue.—It is said to have been composed wholly of ivory and gold, though 39 feet in height.

and was somewhat more than six hundred feet in length. One of the ancient philosophers was observed to measure this ground with great accuracy, and on being questioned as to the reason, answered, that the length of the stadium was originally determined by HERCULES, who, as a measure, took a certain number of times the length of his own foot. Now, said the philosopher, by observing the proportion which the hero's foot bore to that of ordinary men, I shall discover how much he exceeded them in stature.——The thought was ingenious enough, and the idea has been often followed; for it is thus that learned men generally reason, and upon a foot build a whole system of astronomy, of natural philosophy, or of metaphysics.

Among the gentlemen who distinguished themselves at these festivals, I don't know any more celebrated than

MILO,

a renowned wrestler, who was possessed of such enormous strength, that it is pretended

he carried a full-grown ox on his shoulders forty yards, then killed it with a blow of his fist, and afterwards eat it up within the four-and-twenty hours.

Few of the heroes of the present day, I believe, would attempt to rival him in the carrying part, but I fear some of our aldermen would be scarcely inferior to him in the eating.

ASTYADAMAS,

one of the victors at these celebrated festivals, was of the number of those, who (if good appetites are a proof of health) have very little reason to be apprehensive of illness: he was once invited to a dinner, at which he dispatched, with perfect ease and much satisfaction to himself, the viands which had been prepared for a company of nine persons.—Verily this gentleman would have distinguished himself amazingly at a city feast! he would have been pretty nearly a match for any turtle-eater at the table. It is a lucky thing we have not many Astyadamasses now, or we should see bread

at half a crown the loaf, and mutton or beef at eighteen-pence a pound.

POLYDAMAS,

an ancient, who at the Olympic games had often distinguished himself, and who was celebrated for his amazing strength, lost his life at last from too great confidence in his powers. Being one day in a cave with some friends, on a sudden a part of the rock came tumbling down; his companions wisely took to their heels, but he attempted to receive the huge fragment in his arms, and was immediately crushed to pieces beneath it. For my own part, I have a mortal hatred to such embraces, and should certainly have followed the example of the fugitives.

Many singular events happened at the Olympic games, which, however, I have not now time to enumerate. I shall therefore only observe, that they were esteemed of the utmost importance. So much so, that they served as chronological æras, and

indeed time was commonly and universally reckoned by them; thus, instead of saying that such an event happened A. D. 424, the ancient writers would say it took place in the 360th Olympiad.

If our ancestors made these diversions matters of the first moment, their descendants are not behind them in a rage for amusement, and it may with some justice be observed, that after the important occupations of picking the pockets and cutting the throats of their neighbours (under the names of commerce and war), the first consideration of many modern nations appears to be, how they shall contrive to murder the burthensome hours with some amusing rattle. For rattles we must all have, from the philosopher, who dignifies history with the title of an astronomical, a political, or a metaphysical system, down to the sapient spectator of a pantomime, or the ardent admirer of a game at trap-ball.

But public festivals were not confined to the Greeks, or a taste for diversion to the modern Europeans: witness the mysteries of the *Bona Dea*, the LUPERCALIA, &c. A propos—the latter were games celebrated

at Rome on the 15th February, in honour of the rural deity PAN, at the solemnisation of which a thousand irregularities were committed. For the ancients appear to have had a strange fancy, that the best way of recommending themselves to the favour of superior beings was by reducing themselves to the level of beasts. It was during the celebration of the *Lupercalia* that Antony offered to JULIUS CÆSAR the royal crown, which his fears of the people obliged him to decline. I say *royal* crown, because many crowns were in use among the Romans, which did not convey the smallest idea of regal power: such as the rostral crown, ornamented with minute prows and sterns of ships, which was given to such captains as in an engagement first grappled an enemy's vessel. The mural, bearing a resemblance to the turrets of a fortified city, which was the reward of the warrior who first planted the Roman Eagle* on the walls of a besieged town; the triumphal, formed of laurel branches,

* The Roman standards were generally silver eagles, perched upon a pike or lance; hence came the phrase so generally used of "the Roman Eagle."

and decreed by the senate to those generals who had conquered a province, or gained an important battle; and lastly (far more valuable, and more honourable, than all the preceding ones) the civic crown, composed of oak leaves, which was the simple but inspiring emblem of his country's gratitude, to the man who saved the life of a fellow-citizen.

Adieu, my dear pupil! Do not dream to-night of mural, naval, or even civic crowns; let *your* visions be only of wreaths of myrtle, violets, or roses.

LETTER XXVII.

We have not yet done with the festivals of Greece and Rome. Though the Lupercalia must, I fear, have completely disgusted you, yet they were innocent, compared to the horrid

DIAMASTIGOSIS,

at the description of which your tender nature, my dear and amiable pupil, will I fear be shocked. It is, indeed, a most singular instance of human folly and barbarity. This Diamastigosis was a celebrated festival, or ceremony at Sparta, in honour of the goddess Diana; at whose altar young boys were dreadfully whipped,

while their parents (a proof how much prejudice and opinion may prevail over nature) stood by, encouraging them to bear the pain with fortitude, and not by tears or complaints disgrace the character of Lacedemonians. Lest this horrid ceremony should not be performed with sufficient severity, the priests attended, holding a small statue of the Goddess, which they pretended became insupportably heavy, when the blows did not fall with sufficient force. —Cruel and absurd idea! that a superior being could be pleased with the sufferings of infant innocence.

This barbarous ceremony (so congenial to the severe and savage character of the Spartans) was generally attended with most shocking laceration and loss of blood to the unfortunate sufferers, not a few of whom actually expired on the spot. These were buried with much solemnity, being crowned like victors at the Olympic games, with garlands of flowers.

The origin of so inhuman a custom is not perfectly known; some deriving it from one occurrence, some from another: but the most probable supposition is, that

Lycurgus, wishing to make the Spartans wholly a warlike people, instituted this ceremony to inure the youth to suffer pain.—Horrid and absurd policy! Does a British officer, a Stuart or a St. Vincent, a Lake or a Smith, encounter the foes of his country with less courage, because his back is unscarred with the dishonourable impression of the lash? Besides, the natural effect of this barbarity was directly the reverse of that intended. It is an old saying that "a burnt child dreads the fire," and the experience of the pain which a wound gives is surely not the best way of encouraging a youth to run the risk of receiving one! Again, these lacerations, by weakening the constitutions and bodies of the sufferers, rendered them *less*, not *more* able to sustain new injuries! But let us drop a subject so disgraceful to human nature. Thank Heaven! it is a custom which no longer exists, though some reverend pedagogues (having no conception of any other mode of education than by blows) seem extremely anxious to revive it.

Let us then quit these barbarians, and turn our attention to other subjects.

THE PALLADIUM.

The "Palladium of the State" is an expression often used to signify any thing of great political importance. Thus the Freedom of the Press, and the Trial by Jury, are each frequently said to be the Palladium of England: meaning that our liberties depend upon the preservation of them. The explanation of this phrase is to be found in the history of Troy, whose fate in a great measure depended on the preservation of a small image of MINERVA, called *Palladium*, from her name PALLAS, of which the oracle had declared, that the moment it was lost by the Trojans, the city would be ruined. It was accordingly guarded with the greatest care; yet in spite of every precaution, ULYSSES (who seems to have added the qualities of an able thief to his other accomplishments) accompanied by DIOMEDES, succeeded in stealing it

away; instructed, it is supposed, by the treachery of HELENUS, son of PRIAM, who was enraged because HELEN, the fair cause of all the misfortunes of Troy, had, after the death of PARIS, been married to his brother DEIPHOBUS, when he had hoped to have espoused her himself.

The image, it is said, seemed animated with indignation at the affront offered to it by the two Grecians; and by the sudden springs it made, and the lightning which darted from its eyes, testified the displeasure of MINERVA.

But some authors assert, that the Trojans had placed several figures resembling the Palladium close to it, and that ULYSSES, deceived by this contrivance, carried off one of the counterfeits; that ENEAS preserved the real statue, which he took with him to Italy, and that it was afterwards kept with the utmost secresy, in the temple of VESTA at Rome.

Many opinions have been started concerning the PALLADIUM. Some writers maintaining that ABARIS, a Scythian, made it with the bones of PELOPS, son of TANTALUS; while others, with more probabi-

lity, suppose it to have been only a piece of clockwork which was capable of various motions apparently voluntary. It is described as being about three cubits high, in a sitting posture, holding in one hand a distaff, in the other a spear, to intimate that she presided at once over the arts of war and of peace.

Every nation has its own Palladium, in some favourite privilege, which is supposed to secure either the happiness or the *liberty* of the country. Alas! too often they neglect the true Palladium, which inevitably secures both—the virtues of the inhabitants.

The Cave of

TROPHONIUS

is well known—partly in consequence of a well-written paper in a celebrated work, where its effects are very humorously described. If you have not read the essay I allude to, it may be necessary to inform

you, that in the dark ages of superstition oracles were given at this cave; into which the person who wished to penetrate the clouds of futurity entered, clad in a linen robe, and holding a cake of honey in his hand. It was observed, that every one returned from the consultation pale and unhappy, whence it became common all over Greece to say of a melancholy character, that " he had visited TROPHONIUS's Cave."

It might be very beneficial, perhaps, to many of our modern gentlemen (our Bond-street bucks, for example) if they were to take a turn or two in this same mirth-damping cavern. For my part, I think that, to a rational being, this world is itself so perfect a cure for all extravagant gaiety, that I should never have the smallest inclination to take a peep at the mysteries of TROPHONIUS!

The ancients had a fancy that the TAGUS, a river of Spain and Portugal, rolled down in its stream large quantities of golden sands. They ascribe the same quality to the river PACTOLUS, in which they say MIDAS washed away his singular power.* These same

* Of converting every thing he touched into gold.

rivers, if they still flowed over this kind of sand, would be mighty useful to modern monarchs. 'Tis a thousand pities the Thames was not endued with this pretty property. Our great and warlike statesmen (who, if we may be allowed a pun, too often build their financial schemes upon a *sandy* foundation) would find ample employment for all its produce.

ELYSIUM

was the place of reward, where the ancients imagined that charming bowers, pleasant streams, delightful meadows, fountains ever sparkling, shades and groves ever cool and refreshing, with a serene sky enlightened by another sun and other stars, gave pure and innocent delights to the spirits of the virtuous. Others supposed the pleasures of ELYSIUM consisted in the gratification of every low and disgusting sensual appetite. In a word, every one made ELYSIUM contain that which was agreeable to his own taste. The warrior supposed

that his kindred shades amused themselves with mock combats and warlike sports.—The lover of ease maintained, that the manes of the good reposed undisturbed in sylvan scenes; while the lover fancied that eternal dalliance constituted the reward of a life of disappointments.

For myself, were I disposed to form an Elysium upon earth, I should place it in the virtuous arms of wedded love; in the consolations of steady friendship, and the raptures of parental affection.

You seemed pleased with the engraving I had the pleasure of showing to you the other evening, which represented the APOTHEOSIS of AUGUSTUS.

I believe I have explained the meaning of the expression, and informed you that the ancients had a pretty fancy of making divinities; and thinking, probably, that the heavens were but scantily filled, these gentlemen took upon themselves the labour of supplying the vacancies.

Accordingly, when any of their monarchs died, and they thought that an act of adulation to the deceased might please his successor, they were so obliging as to deify

the dead man, who was of course afterwards ranked among the Gods. The ceremonies practised at this impious and ridiculous mummery were various, and it would but tire your patience to describe them. The principal one was, the letting fly an eagle (previously tied to the funeral pile on which the bodies were burnt), who being imagined to be the favourite bird of JUPITER, was supposed to take with him to heaven the soul of the deceased.

Had this charming custom been continued to the present day, what a collection of royal deities should we have had.—CHARLES of Sweden would have inevitably been made a second MARS, as a recompense for the throats he cut.——OLIVER CROMWELL would have taken the place of MINERVA for wisdom, i. e. cunning and hypocrisy: and as to the imperial BONAPARTE, it is more than probable that his obsequious courtiers would have dethroned JUPITER himself to place in his seat him whom they already style the vicegerent of heaven!

DEUCALION'S DELUGE

is so often mentioned by poets, that it may be necessary to inform you of its history. In the fabulous age, DEUCALION, brother of PROMETHEUS, was the king of Thessaly, and during his reign, according to the mythologists, JUPITER, enraged at the wickedness of man, determined to destroy the world by an universal inundation, which accordingly took place, with all the terrific circumstances which attended the general deluge as described in scripture.

DEUCALION escaped in a vessel built by the advice of his brother, which, after being tossed about for nine days, stopped on Mount Parnassus. At the descent of the waters, DEUCALION and his wife Pyrrha consulted the oracle as to what steps they should take in order to re-people the world, and were commanded to throw behind them the bones of their grandmother. After some hesitation, they concluded that this could mean only the stones of the earth;

accordingly they obeyed the injunctions of the oracle, and the stones were converted into men and women. It is needless to point out the resemblance between this fable and the scriptural account of the general deluge. They bear too marked a resemblance to leave any doubt upon the mind of their having been meant to represent the same event.

It has just occurred to me, that many of the ancient and modern conquerors ought to have been endowed with the same pebble-throwing power as Deucalion, that they might be able to repair the loss of population which their arms have produced. Alas! alas! they would have had but too much occasion to exert it.

THE CORNUCOPIA,

or horn of plenty, so frequently used as an emblem of wealth and prosperity by painters and sculptors, was by some authors supposed to have been the horn of the goat Amalthea, who nourished with her milk

the august father of the Gods.—That when she died, Jupiter in gratitude made a constellation of her, now known by the name of CAPRICORN, or the goat.—That he covered the EGIS, his terrible shield, with her skin,—and that he gave one of her horns to the nymphs who had protected his infancy. It was endued with the singular power of producing any thing the owner wished for. Mighty convenient, truly! I should like to pick up a horn of the same animal myself!

Other writers maintain that ACHELOUS, a deity who presided over a river in EPIRUS, entered the lists with HERCULES as one of the suitors of DEJANIRA, and finding himself inferior in strength to the hero, he changed his form into that of an ox, in which shape he renewed the contest, but lost one of his horns during the combat. This horn they assert is the real cornucopia, which may be an allusion to the wealth and plenty produced by rivers.

The horn of plenty seems for many years to have been showering down its contents upon commercial and luxurious Britain; but alas! its gifts, instead of tumbling into the pockets of the inhabitants, are

swallowed up by another horn, called *the Horn of Taxation!*

The sweets of

HYBLA,

a favourite phrase of the poets, originated from a mountain of that name in Sicily, which abounded in thyme and other wild flowers; whence the honey produced in the neighbourhood was peculiarly pleasing, and is accordingly much celebrated by ancient writers.

This phrase, however, is understood in many different ways.—Thus, language singularly elegant and harmonious is said to abound with more than Hybla sweetness. By some authors again, it is said to dwell on the lips of orators; and in this sense I have no doubt that a poor curate understands it, when a reverend bishop informs him that he is appointed to a comfortable living; or the starving soldier of fortune, when he receives from his general a lucrative commission; while the unlucky author, who

has long practised the duty of temperance, in consequence of the consumptive state of his purse, acknowledges that the orations of DEMOSTHENES himself do not abound with such sweets as that short but energetic composition, which begins with—"We promise to pay Mr. Abraham Newland or bearer." For my own part, I am decidedly of opinion, that the sweets of HYBLA are to be found only on the lips of beauty, innocence, and virtue.

AMBROSIA

was the substance which served for food to the Gods; as

NECTAR

was the liquor with which they quenched their thirst, for the ancients could not rise to the conception of a being perfectly spiritual; indeed their deities were nothing more than human beings gifted with im-

mortality; but subject to all the passions, follies, and vices of men. Their food had of course some miraculous qualities, such as curing all wounds, &c. Hence our modern lovers talk of the nectar and ambrosia of their mistresses lips, and the common use of these and similar nonsensical expressions laid me under the necessity of just explaining them to you.

The ideas which various characters attach to the phrase I have just mentioned are sometimes very curious. The toper imagines that Nectar certainly meant either claret, champagne, or burgundy; while the worshipful company of aldermen will assure you to a man, that ambrosia is but another name for turtle or venison. The country parson thinks the flavour of a tythe pig approaches nearly to that of the celestial food; and, on the other hand, his neighbour, the rustic squire, if he has ever heard of nectar, will certainly conceive that the poet must have meant to describe his home-brewed October!

I presume I must now have so effectually tired my amiable pupil, that she will very sincerely rejoice to hear that the

" *Letters on Mythology*" are for the present at an end. May they have conveyed some instruction, blended with a little amusement, to my fair friend. I shall think my labour amply rewarded, if to *her* it has afforded the smallest gratification—if it has charmed away one melancholy thought, employed one vacant hour, or added any thing to the ample stores of her elegant and cultivated mind!

APPENDIX.

APOLLO,

or the Sun, was highly venerated among our Celtic ancestors, particularly the Druids, by whom he was called *Ap-huil*, (whence, in all probability, his name APOLLO is derived). *Ap-huil* I take to signify "the eye," and it is from the Celtic *huil* that the French *œuil* for that part of the face is plainly derivable.

Sunday is so evidently the day of the Sun, as not to need any comment or explanation; and in fact the day which is now set apart for divine worship there is little reason to doubt was very anciently appropriated to the purpose of communicating moral instruction to the people, and was dedicated to the great *Ap-huil*, or all-seeing

eye, typefied by that resplendent object the Sun—whence it came to be indifferently styled the day of Apollo (*Ap-huil*) or *Sun-day*.

It was also named the *Sab-aith*-day, from the discourses delivered by the priest, called *Sab-aith*—the words or sentiments of the wise man. Hence our Sabbath-day.

VULCAN.

This deity has nothing very particular in his history. He was the tutelary divinity of manufactures, and most pieces of exquisite workmanship were attributed to him. He forged Jupiter's thunderbolts, and formed invulnerable arms for various heroes, even for those who styled his wife mamma, without claiming him as their father.

His two most celebrated actions are, first his confining his mother (for her want of maternal affection) by means of a throne he presented to her, containing several secret springs, by whose action she was fixed immoveably to her seat; but from which situation he was afterwards prevailed upon

to release her: and secondly his endeavour to free her from the effects of JUPITER's anger, for which he got turned out of heaven, in as violent a way as some ministers of state have got turned out of place*.

He is usually represented in the act of forming a thunderbolt, which he holds on the anvil with pincers, while he raises his muscular arm to strike it with a massy hammer: his face is clouded with smoke, his breast and chin covered with long hair, and he is lame of one leg. In fact the deity of metals may, with great facility, be mistaken for a common blacksmith.

I do not know whether I ought to waste paper by describing such a despicable character as

THERSITES;

but, as he is frequently alluded to by authors, it may not be amiss to inform you, that

* Dr. Moore gives us a curious account of the manner of dismissal once practised at Prague: this was no other than taking the three leading members of administration and throwing them out of a high window—(an idea seemingly borrowed from the history of Vulcan.) The lively author observes, "that in all probability the gentlemen in opposition had tried gentler means in vain."

he was one of the officers who led the Grecian troops in the war of Troy, and like some other deformed creatures (for he was as ugly as imagination can well conceive) extremely fond of satirizing his companions, particularly those who held the highest posts in the army. Among others, ACHILLES came under the lash of his licentious tongue; but it is sometimes dangerous to joke with lions, and the invulnerable hero, displeased at some of his observations, complimented him with a gentle salute, with that part of his person vulgarly called the fist, and dispatched him to the realm of shades.

A cowardly illiberal railer is very often styled a THERSITES, and if being readier at finding fault with the fighting of others than at fighting themselves can give a claim to the title, I fear we have but too many THERSITES among us yet.

HARPOCRATES

was the son of ISIS and OSIRIS; he is represented with his finger on his mouth, as i tmating, that the mysteries of religion

should never be revealed; and the Romans, under this idea I presume, placed his statue at the doors of their places of worship, to notify to those who entered that what passed within was not to be made known, beyond the walls of the temple.

THE ABORIGINES

were a people of Italy, over whom SATURN is supposed to have reigned. They assumed their name "ab origines" "from the beginning," as supposing themselves to have inhabited the country from the remotest ages; they even believed they were born of the soil. These good gentlemen are not the only people whose vanity has been delighted with an idea of their antiquity. Every nation has, at one period or other, enumerated its ancestry for thousands of years, and, in fact, all have been *ab-origines*. These gentry tracing up their pedigree till it terminated in mother earth, puts me in mind of the old story of the contest between the son of the postillion, and the offspring of the penny

postman; who having each vehemently asserted the antiquity of his family, one of the disputants (determined to conclude the contest by a bold stroke) protested he could trace his pedigree up to Adam himself; an assertion which the other immediately surpassed, by vowing that he could carry his up *beyond* Adam; thereby, as his adversary observed, proving himself to be descended from *beasts*, the only predecessors of Adam in paradise. These Aborigines, however, beat even the postillion, by proving themselves the offspring of mud or clay.

The Goddess

MNEMOSYNE

presided over a faculty without which all the arts, sciences, and knowledge of past and present ages, with the long train of their important effects on the comforts, happiness, and very existence of mankind, would be at end. This invaluable faculty is memory. The ancients feigned that MNEMOSYNE married JUPITER, and pro-

duced the nine Muses; a fable which signifies, that all the knowledge of which man is possessed arises originally from the goodness of the Supreme, and is matured and brought to perfection by the assistance of memory.

I have mentioned before, that the constellation

GEMINI

contained the celebrated brothers CASTOR and POLLUX. ASTREA, the Goddess of Justice, I have also noticed, as forming that sign now called

VIRGO.

The fabulists assert that

SCORPIO

is the scorpion which put an end to the existence of ORION.

CANCER

was supposed to be the crab, which JUNO sent to bite the foot of HERCULES, while engaged with the HYDRA: as the Nemean Lion is feigned to have been elevated into that of

LEO.

CHIRON the centaur, instructor of ACHILLES, and other heroes, sparkles under the form of

SAGITTARIUS,

or the Archer.

The goat AMALTHEA, wet-nurse to JUPITER, appears in the constellation

CAPRICORN.

Some authors have been of opinion, that

AQUARIUS

represented Ganymede, the cup-bearer of the Gods; and that

PISCES,

or the Fish, was the Dolphin which persuaded Amphitrite to become the wife of Neptune.

However, various opinions are entertained on many of these points, and the fact seems to be, that the greater part of the constellations in the Zodiac have had allegorical meanings assigned to them, ages, perhaps, before the Greek and Roman mythologists filled them with their agreeable fancies. Thus Leo, or the Lion, is imagined to have been an allusion to the raging heat of the Sun at that period; Scorpio an emblem of its destructive effect, when too intense: Virgo is said to have been originally only a peasant girl, with a wheat-sheaf, as an emblem of harvest: while Cancer, or

the Crab, is generally considered as emblematical of the apparently retrograde motion of the Sun, when arrived at that constellation. In like manner AQUARIUS may represent a rainy season, and PISCES a time proper for fishing.

But I had nearly forgotten one sign, the history of which is somewhat celebrated, viz.

ARIES,

or the Ram, which the poets feign to be the same horned gentleman who bore on his back the golden fleece, which was the cause of JASON's celebrated voyage, commonly called the Argonautic expedition, one of the most noted and remarkable events in the fabulous ages.

JASON, with a great number of heroes, embarked on board a ship called ARGO, in which they proceeded to COLCHIS, where they found the fleece guarded by innumerable precautions, and surrounded with such terrors, as to appal the bravest minds. All these JASON overcame by the assist-

ance of MEDEA, daughter of the possessor of this dangerous prize, who became enamoured of him. This affection produced a series of crimes too horrible to relate; and indeed the whole of the Argonautic expedition, though taken as a *datum* in chronology, by very respectable writers, is so filled with contradictions, crimes, absurdities, and impossibilities, that I will not trespass longer on the patience of my amiable reader, but quit the odious subject.

Another part of the heavens are filled with the constellation called

BERENICE'S HAIR.

This same wig, by the bye, got up there by a mere piece of astronomical flattery.—BERENICE, queen of Egypt, had a very beautiful head of hair, the whole of which she promised to offer to the goddess VENUS, if her husband came back in safety from an expedition he was going to undertake. Upon his return the hair was cut off, and sent to the temple, from whence it afterwards disappeared; on which an astrono-

mer, who evidently had an eye to other things besides planets, asserted that these handsome ringlets were placed in the heavens, in a particular spot which he pointed out, the stars of which have ever since gone by the name of BERENICE'S HAIR.

Were the making of constellations a trade encouraged by monarchs of modern times, I doubt not we should see Bonaparte's iron crown, the papal tiara, or even the duchess of Y——'s shoe, elevated to the etherial regions; but these abominable ancients have filled up every corner of heaven in such an insufferable manner, that a poor fellow of an astronomer in these times has no way left of making his court to a great man, unless he has the good luck to find out a new planet: then, indeed, he has an opportunity of giving the name of his patron to realms among the stars, a thousand times larger than the dominions he may happen to possess upon earth. But alas! these lucky hits so seldom happen to a man.—I wonder our philosophers don't pluck up a spirit, and serve these antiquated usurpers of the skies with a regular

ejectment, if they did not choose to accept a civil notice to quit; for after we had once got rid of these old fellows, there would be plenty of room for all the patrons, friends, and sweet-hearts of our Herchells, Huttons, &c. However, till they choose to do this, we must content ourselves with the old tenants of the heavens.

THE END.

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ERRATA.

Page 5	Line 12	*For* " its name from Latium" *read* its name, Latium.
5	13	*For* " his concealment" *read* Saturn's concealment.
55	15	*For* " Phegethon" *read* Phlegethon.
61	21	*For* " Giant" *read* Giants.
97	18	*For* " eternaj" *read* eternal.
148	11	*For* " who" *read* which.
162	21	*For* " born" *read* borne.
194		*For* " MARPESA" *read* MARPESSA.
258	26	*For* " their honour" *read* the honour of the Grecians.
296	21	*For* " wears" *read* nears.
307	4	*For* " dim" *read* din.

Printed by T. DAVISON, Whitefriars.